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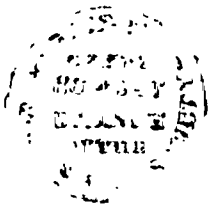

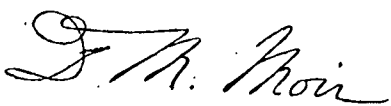

THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

DAVID MACBETH MOIR

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EDITED BY

THOMAS AIRD

WITH A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR

VOL. I.

IX K 20

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
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MEMOIR.

MEMOIR.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH, BOYHOOD, AND YOUTH.

DAVID MACBETH MOIR, author of the following Poems, was born at Musselburgh on the 5th of January 1798. His parents were respectable citizens. He was the second of four children. It may be mentioned here that two of them, Hugh and Charles, are still living; men of intelligence and virtue, both of them. The father of this worthy family died in 1817; and the mother in 1842, at the age of seventy-five. It is a very common belief that intellectual qualities come by the mother's side. Whether or not the belief be well founded, it is a fact that our poet's mother was a woman of good understanding and general refinement, and of sound taste in matters of literature; so much so, that, in the earlier part of his poetical course, young Moir was in the habit of consulting her

about his pieces in manuscript, and had confidence in her judgment to the last. As she encouraged him in all his studies, it is pleasing to know that she lived to enjoy what is dearest to a mother's heart—the fame of her son.

Our poet got the first rudiments of his education at a school of minor note in Musselburgh. He was then entered at the Grammar School, which at that time was taught by Mr Taylor, and had a high character. At the boarding establishment connected with the school were placed the sons of several of our old Scottish families of distinction. During his attendance of about six years at this school, young Moir learned the Latin, Greek, and French languages, and the elements of geometry and algebra. He was a cheerful, active, and diligent scholar, and always stood high in his classes. In after years, however, he used to say that his scholarship was but shallow, and that the disadvantage of his own deficiency made him all the more careful in giving his children a superior education. Taylor was a perfect model of the old Tory and Loyalist, Moir was a favourite and admiring disciple; and so, perhaps, the boy insensibly caught from his master's well-known political character notions which gradually strengthened into that Conservatism of Church and State which was one of the steadfast principles of his manhood.

Attentive scholar though he was, we may be sure that a nature such as Moir's, simple and healthy,

would rejoice in all manner of innocent sports. Gardening, and painting in water-colours, were the private recreations that he loved most; but in all the games of gregarious boyhood he took a robust and hearty share. Skating was his special delight; and bold and graceful was he at that beautiful play. In reference to his early amusements he writes thus, in a little essay entitled *School Recollections*, published in *Friendship's Offering* of 1829:—"What delight in life have we ever experienced more exquisite than that which flowed in upon us from the teacher's 'bene, bene,' our own self-approbation, and release from the tasks of the day—the green fields around us wherein to ramble, the stream beside us wherein to angle, the world of games and pastimes 'before us, where to choose?' Words are inadequate to express the thrill of transport with which, on the rush made from the school-house door, the hat is waved in air, and the shout sent forth. What a variety of amusements succeed each other! Every month has its favourite ones. The sportsman does not look more keenly into his calendar for the commencement of the fishing, shooting, or hare-hunting season, than the younker for the time of flying kites, bowling at cricket, football, spinning pegtops, and playing at marbles. Boys are guided by a sort of unpremeditated social compact, which draws them out of doors, as soon as meals are discussed, with a sincere thirst for amusement, as certainly as rooks congregate in

spring to discuss the propriety of building nests, or swallows in autumn to deliberate in conclave on the expediency of emigration. With these and similar thoughts in my mind, I strayed down to the banks of the river, and came upon a favourite scene of our boyish sports. Some of the very bushes I recognised as our old lurking-places of hunt-the-hare; and on the old fantastic beech-tree I discovered the very bough from which we were accustomed to suspend our swings. The fresh green plat by the bank of the stream lay before me. It was there that we played at leap-frog, or gathered dandelions for our tame rabbits; and at its western extremity were still extant the relics of the deal-seat, at which we used to assemble on autumn evenings to have our round of stories. Many a witching tale and wondrous tradition has there been told; many a marvel of figures that 'revisited the glimpses of the moon;' many a recital of heroic and chivalrous enterprise, accomplished ere warriors dwindled down to the mere pigmy strength of mortals. Sapped by the wind and rain, the planks lay in a sorely decayed and rotten state, looking in their mossiness like signposts of desolation, mementoes of terrestrial instability. Traces of the knife were still here and there visible upon the trunks of the supporting trees; and with little difficulty I could decipher some well-remembered initials.

'Cold were the hands that carved them there.'"

We see, in these circumstances of Moir's free and happy boyhood, the very best food on which the poetic spirit within him could be feeding and growing; and the locality in which he grew up, so rich in picturesque old character, beauties of scenery, and historic associations, was full of promptings to genius. The ancient burgh, with its quaint old-world usages; the Roman Bridge; remnants of hermitages, chapels, and shrines; fabulous wells of virtue; suburbs of seafaring veterans, grey with the awe of "hair-breadth 'scapes;" houses of antique fame, embowered in the depths of venerable trees; crumbling castles and bloody old battle-fields; the sunny slopes of Inveresk, and the sweep of view from its crowning summit—Craigmillar, and Arthur's Seat, and Edinburgh hanging high in the west; the far-off Ochils, so soft and graceful, melting into sky; Inchkeith and Bass in the waters; villas and towns gleaming away on the bending shore; Esk from its inland woods; the multitudinous sea, with its ever-changing aspects of storm and calm, of terror and beauty—how impressive must all this have been to the thoughtful and enthusiastic boy who had his "home and haunt" in the midst of it.

Moir was now thirteen years old, when Dr Stewart, a medical practitioner in Musselburgh, a man of talent and worth, and very successful in his business, having known the boy for some time, and liked him greatly, got him as an apprentice. The

term was four years; but the indenture bore that, in the last winter of his service, David was to be free to attend college, in the pursuit of his medical studies. Thus was his professional life determined. He entered upon his new duties with his usual cheerful zeal, to the special satisfaction of his kind-hearted master, who treated him more as a personal friend than an apprentice. The following anecdote, communicated by Mr Hugh Moir, refers to the first or second year of his apprenticeship:—"Late on a Saturday night, in the depth of winter, an alarm having been given that the body of a poor man, who had accidentally fallen into the mill-stream, had been found at the Sea-mill, I accompanied my brother David to the place to which the body had been conveyed after it was taken out of the water. Two other medical men, besides himself, tried the usual means of resuscitation, and persevered in their humane efforts till every one present saw the case to be utterly hopeless. A cart was then ordered, and the body was sent to the house where it was ascertained the man had lodged. My brother and I returned home. About midnight I was surprised on being awakened by him, with the request that I should accompany him to the house to which the body had been taken. It was at a considerable distance, and in a dirty narrow *close* at the west end of the town. Off we went accordingly. On entering, my brother desired a candle to be lighted, and I having accompanied him into the little room,

we found the body covered with a sheet, and a plate of salt laid upon the breast. Withdrawing the sheet, David anxiously passed his hand over the body, to ascertain if any warmth still existed. It was evidently on his part a 'hoping against hope.' He was satisfied, however, after having done this; and the sheet having been carefully replaced over the corpse, we went home. That he had even the shadow of a shade of hope in this visit, I do not imagine; I attribute it solely to a nervous anxiety for his own self-satisfaction." A characteristic anecdote, indicating that keen conscientiousness of practical duty which was the primary foundation of Moir's character, and that nervous sensibility which belongs to the poetical temperament.

Business first, literary recreation next — and poetry the prime of it: such was the key-note on which Moir pitched his life, and kept it to the end. Business has not been neglected: the recreation now begins. Our author's first poetical attempt bears the date of 1812, when he was in his fifteenth year. The lines are correct and neat, but altogether imitative, being after the manner of Pope's first verses: genius, even the most original, is always imitative at first. Soon after this, he made his way with two short prose essays into *The Cheap Magazine*, a small Haddington publication. Of the anxieties connected with this, his first public appearance as an author, he sometimes spoke in after years, playfully describing the restless excitement

and eager impatience with which he went out into the street to await the arrival of the stage-coach by which the magazine was sent, and the rapture with which he "saw himself actually in print."

In the last winter of his apprenticeship, young Moir attended Edinburgh College. Every Monday morning he walked up to his classes, and he returned home every Saturday night to spend the Sabbath in the family circle. "During the week," says his brother Hugh, "he lodged in a small room in Shakspeare Square. In the evenings he was in the habit of attending Carfrae's sale-rooms, where the best part of his small weekly allowance of pocket-money was expended on books. I remember the pride with which, every Saturday night, he showed us his weekly purchases. His economy and contentedness were admirable, mental improvement being his great aim. Occasionally he indulged in a visit to the theatre, to see the performances of Mrs Siddons and Miss O'Neill, John Kemble and Edmund Kean, which made a very powerful impression upon his mind." At the conclusion of his apprenticeship he attended college regularly, and got his diploma as a surgeon in the spring of 1816, when he was only eighteen years of age. It was his purpose to enter the medical department of the army; but the battle of Waterloo had now put military matters on a different footing, and so the purpose was given up. He returned home, and spent the summer in literary

pursuits, contributing occasionally to *The Scots Magazine*, and taking an active part in a debating society, which he had instituted under the title of "The Musselburgh Forum." Of this society he was secretary; and so pleased were the members with his services, that, at the end of their session, they unanimously voted him a silver medal, suitably inscribed. Towards the close of the same year he ventured on a small anonymous publication, entitled *The Bombardment of Algiers, and other Poems.* The edition was distributed almost wholly among his friends. The performance was not without promise; but, as the public have no sympathy with "*very good, considering,*" it won no fame.

One important attribute is noticeable in all our young poet's early rhymes—namely, what Wordsworth calls "the accomplishment of verse," in easy, fluent play. Whether it be an original faculty, or how "the accomplishment" may come, it is difficult to determine; but certain it is, that men essentially and by nature great poets have wanted it, and, wanting it, have missed poetic fame. Take Jeremy Taylor, for example, whose mind was as a rich virgin soil, unconscious of the plough, casting up its enormous prodigality of abundance, trees of stature like the cedars of Lebanon, jungles of tangled bloom, and monstrous weeds—still "weeds of glorious feature"—

"Wild above rule or art."

Strange that such a nature, with all its teeming foison of poetry, did not burst out into rythmical measures. He tried it, but his overt poetry is pitiful prose. Compared with his own unmeasured prose, flashing its lights from myriad points, it is Ariel pegged in the entrails of the knotted oak, to Ariel "playing in the plighted clouds."

In 1817 our young surgeon joined Dr Brown of Musselburgh, as a partner in his medical practice. The practice was an extensive one, and the toil was great. Moir's father, however, was just dead, and his mother was left to "the battle of life;" and so the well-principled young man, ever ready for honest work, took the new toil upon him all the more zealously, in order to help her. "Many a time," says his brother Charles, "have I heard my mother, who was a woman of a strong mind, record with a tearful eye the struggles of that period, and the noble bearing of her son David, who carried her successfully through all her difficulties." Nor, amidst these grave responsibilities, was literature forgotten. Moir was now acquainted with Mr Thomas Pringle, author of *The Autumnal Excursion*, and one of the editors of Constable's *Edinburgh Magazine*, and became a frequent contributor, both in prose and verse, to that publication. It is worthy of being mentioned that one of his poems, beginning "When thou at eventide art roaming," having been transcribed by Mrs Brunton from the magazine, was found among her papers after her

death, and published as hers by her husband in her posthumous novel of *Emmeline*. Dr Brunton, however, on being informed of his mistake, wrote a handsome apology to the author; and the piece was withdrawn in the second edition of the novel. Business and literary exercises so laborious drew upon young Moir's hours of sleep. "When the duties of the day were over," says his brother Charles—"and it was always nine or ten o'clock in the evening before he could count on that—after supper the candle was lighted in his bed-room, and the work of the desk began. Having shared the same room with him for many years in my early life, the routine of those nights is as fresh in my mind as if it had been but yesterday. With that loving-kindness of heart, and that tender care for others, which was the distinguishing feature of his character, he used to persuade me to retire to rest; and many a time have I awoke, when the night was far spent, and wondered to find him still at his books and pen."

Under all these labours Moir grew up to manhood, well knit of body and firm of health. "I am far from being delicate," thus he writes in 1828 to Dr Macnish of Glasgow: "I have not been confined fourteen days to bed for the last twenty years—a pretty good sign that my constitution is not naturally a very tender one. So far from it, I am much more known in the town of Musselburgh, among the *profanum vulgus*, for my gymnastic pro-

ficiency than for any mental capabilities; and many could give evidence to my prowess in leaping, running, swimming, and skating, who never dreamt that I 'penned a sonnet when I should engross.'" All very good; but, as in the case of Burns and other men of genius, the general frame may be robust, and yet the nervous system tremblingly delicate. To Macnish, the very same year, we find our poet confessing thus:—"You ask me if I am ever subject to hypochondria. For several years past the tone of my mind has been much more equable, and though, like all the rest of the *irritabile genus*, liable to ups and downs, I have become a callous enough, dull enough, plodding man of the world. From eighteen to twenty-one I lived in such a state of nervous excitement, that the very idea of encountering a strange face, or making a call at a house where I was not thoroughly familiar, was a torture that called on me for an ejaculation to Heaven for support; but the years which have been blunting my sensibilities have brought with them the not to be despised benefit of more commonplace nerves. As a printed specimen of my having been hipped, I need only refer you to 'Despondency, a Reverie,' in my volume, a piece no notice of which has ever been taken, so far as I have seen, but which, notwithstanding, (*me-ipso judice,*) is one of the most deeply poetical pieces I have ever produced. Perhaps you know, and have experienced, as well as myself, that employment of

the mind is the best method of dispelling vapours, and that without bodily exercise, nay, fatigue, a man of thought and reflection is apt to become jaundiced in his perceptions and feelings. Often at the time I have found this a horrid annoyance—the being obliged to break through my trains of thought, and mix with the great Babel of the world—but I have had reason to be thankful for it afterwards: I have no doubt that my health has often been preserved by such rude interferences with my meditations."

Constituted thus of the practical and the contemplative, of the robust and the keenly susceptible, we have in young Moir that duality of nature which makes a complete man.

CHAPTER II.

MANHOOD.

Mr Moir's strict attention to his professional business may be guessed from the fact, that between 1817, when he joined Dr Brown, and 1828, when he made a run to Glasgow and Northumberland, he did not sleep a night out of Musselburgh. No fagging, however, could keep down his literary spirit. He was now stepping out upon the bolder arena of *Blackwood's Magazine.* William Blackwood, a man of rare sagacity, intelligence, courage, and persevering energy, saw at once the value of his new contributor, and kept him at work. Animated by such appreciation, Moir's mind seems to have been in a state of great exaltation at this time. Pensive tenderness to-day, frolicsome humour to-morrow—ready was he for both. A few friends about Musselburgh, who knew the fun with which he had enlivened a manuscript Magazine, projected and kept up in their circle mainly by himself, might not have

been surprised to learn that the best of the *jeux-d'esprit* with which young Maga was now crackling —such as "The Eve of St Jerry," "The Auncient Waggonere," "Billy Routing," &c.—were let off by Moir; but the body of his admirers will be surprised to learn it now for the first time. Maginn has generally got the credit of Moir's squibs. Our poet kept his *incognito* for a while, even with Mr Blackwood, communicating his serious and his jocose pieces, as if from two different parties—though, to say the truth, the sagacious publisher scented the identity of authorship from the very first. In all his play of sparrow-shot, sharp and decisive was the skill with which our humorist hit the folly as it flew. A queer refrain for a queer song was quite a knack with him. "Have you never observed," thus, on an after day, writes to him his friend, Mr Robert Chambers, with his usual curious ingenuity, "that songs appear all the more acceptable to the popular mouth when they are a little daft-like? Honest Captain Gray always joins me in this idea. A kind of rant, or 'drant,' *aut aliocunque nomine gaudeat*, often fixes itself on the public, when capital, sensible verses have no chance. Is it because we sing only (generally speaking) when we are in a frivolous, capersome humour, and don't care about what comes uppermost? If not this, hang me if I can tell what it is!" You have touched the soul of Oddity, O! clever master of the *Popular*

Rhymes. With or without a reason, Moir could embody it.

An occasional short essay in prose varied our author's contributions to *Blackwood.* These essays were but slight, and attracted little notice. His comic vein of poetry intermitted—his serious one ran freely on. His grave verses were stamped with the signature of the Greek letter Δ; hence the title of "Delta" usually given to Moir in the literary world. "The Pyramid" and "The Triangle" were playful variations by his friends. The popularity of Delta's soft and beautiful pieces was very great, especially among the young, and helped well to fix *Blackwood* in the hearts of the rising generation. The reading of poetry is a passion with a great proportion of young people, and the magazine which has it abundantly is their delight: as they advance in life, they may care less for poetry, still they go on with the series of their magazine, clinging to it as their first love: and its continued poetry, the while, is attracting another generation of young readers. This, by the way, as a hint to editors.

Delta at length became personally known to Mr Blackwood, and, through him, to several of the leading writers in the *Magazine*—Professor Wilson among others. This acquaintanceship with the Professor gradually ripened into a friendship not to be dissolved but at the grave's mouth. In the multiform nature of Wilson, his mastery

over the hearts of ingenuous youth is one of his finest characteristics. It is often won in this peculiar way:—An essay is submitted to him as Professor, Editor, or Friend, by some worthy young man. Mr Wilson does not like it, and says so in general terms. The youth is not satisfied, and, in the tone of one rather injured, begs to know specific faults. The generous Aristarch, never dealing haughtily with a young worth, instantly sits down, and begins by conveying, in the most fearless terms of praise, his sense of that worth; but, this done, wo be to the luckless piece of prose or "numerous verse!" Down goes the scalpel with the most minute savagery of dissection, and the whole tissues and ramifications of fault are laid naked and bare. The young man is astonished; but his nature is of the right sort; he never forgets the lesson; and, with bands of filial affection stronger than hooks of steel, he is knit for life to the man who has dealt with him thus. Many a young heart will recognise this peculiar style of the great nature I speak of. The severe service was once done to Delta; he was the young man to profit by it: the friendship was all the firmer.

In 1823, Mr Galt the novelist came to live at Eskgrove, in the immediate neighbourhood of Musselburgh, and a friendly intercourse was established between Mr Moir and him. "He was then in his forty-fourth year," says Delta, in his after

Memoir of Galt, " of herculean frame, and in the full vigour of health. His height might be about six feet one or two, and he evinced a tendency to corpulency. His hair, which was jet black, had not yet become grizzled; his eyes were small but piercing; his nose almost straight; long upper lip, and finely rounded chin. At an early period of life Mr Galt had suffered from smallpox; but the marks of its ravages were by no means severe, and, instead of impairing, lent a peculiar interest to his manly and striking countenance. He was seldom or never seen without spectacles; but we are uncertain whether the use of these arose from natural shortsightedness, or from the severity of his studies. In conversation, Mr Galt's manner was somewhat measured and solemn, yet full of animation, and characterised by a peculiar benignity and sweetness. Except when questioned, he was not particularly communicative, and in mixed company was silent and reserved. His answers, however, always conveyed the results of a keen and discriminative judgment, and of an eye that allowed not the ongoings of the world to pass unobserved or unimproved." Such was the confidence reposed by Galt in Moir, that when afterwards hurried off to America before he could get his *Last of the Lairds* finished, he left two or three of the concluding chapters, involving, of course, the winding-up, that all-important part of a novel, to be completed by his friend Delta. He

himself did not see the *finale* till a year or two afterwards, and laughed heartily at the ingenious way in which his substitute had disposed of some of his characters.

Moir's professional duties were widening every year; but his self-imposed literary work, far from slackening on that account, only increased the more in vigour and extent. The more he did, the more he seemed able to do. Besides his regular contributions of grave poetry to *Blackwood*, bearing the usual signature of Δ, he was now pouring forth in the *Magazine* all manner of jocularities in prose and verse—familiar letters and rhyming epistles from O'Doherty; mock-heroic specimens of translations from Horace; Christmas carols by the fancy contributors, Mullion and the rest; ironical imitations of living poets; Cockney love-songs; puns and parodies; freaks and fantasias endless—all little wotted of by the world as coming from him. The concentrated pungency of the very gall of wit is reserved for such satiric masters as Swift; but Moir could always be sprightly, sharp, and clever.

Towards the close of 1824, our author published his *Legend of Genevieve, with other Tales and Poems.* Several of the pieces were new, but the body of the volume was composed of selections from his contributions to the magazines. The publication was well received by the press, and increased Delta's poetical reputation; but the sale was not

extensive. The fact that he continued singing monthly in *Blackwood* gave the book a sort of fractional and incidental character; and the public, progressive in their sympathy with every fresh outpouring, did not care much for a single isolated volume belonging mainly to the past. It was unfortunate, too, that prominence of title and place was given to "The Legend of Genevieve," certainly one of the least successful of all Delta's productions. The "Hymn to the Moon" is a beautiful poem. The "Hymn to the Night Wind," which is sublime as well as beautiful, is probably the finest in the volume.

In 1827 Mr Blackwood introduced me to Mr Moir; and much about the same time Dr Macnish, author of *The Anatomy of Drunkenness*, and still better known by his literary *nom-de-guerre*, "The Modern Pythagorean," became acquainted with him also. Macnish's talent and sagacity and shrewdness, combined with the manliest simplicity and warm-heartedness, and the tags of oddity and fringes of whimsicality which hung all about the native movement of his mind, in the regions of the quaint and queer, made him a perfect delight to Delta; and they loved one another like brothers. An improved edition of *The Anatomy of Drunkenness* was dedicated to Moir.

The Autobiography of Mansie Wauch began in 1824, and the series ran on for the three following years. So popular was it in Scotland, that I

know districts where country clubs, waiting impatiently for the *Magazine*, met monthly, so soon as it was issued, and had *Mansie* read aloud by one of their number, amidst explosions of congregated laughter. The work was published, with fresh additions, in a volume in 1828, and its success as a book more than sustained its first popularity as a serial. Not only in Scotland, but in England and America also, *Mansie* is now a standard classic of humour — giving Moir, for all time to come, a uniqueness of fame as a novelist. The fame is deserved. Wide and deep and true is the mirror held up by broad-fronted Burns in the very face of Scottish nature and life; and yet he has almost completely missed those many peculiar features of the national character and manners which are brought out so inimitably in *Mansie Wauch*. Mansie himself is perfect as a portraiture. What an exquisite compound of conceit, cowardice, gossiping silliness, pawkiness, candour, kindly affections, and good Christian principle—the whole amalgam, with no violent contrasts, with no gross exaggerations, beautifully blent down into verisimilitude, presenting to us a unique hero at once ludicrous and loveable. And how admirably in keeping with the central autobiographer are the characters and scenes which revolve around his needle. Totally different is the whole delineation from the broad, strong, national characteristics, rough and ready, hit off by Burns; but yet equally

true to nature, and thoroughly Scottish. In some of Galt's best Scotch novels we find characters of the same pawky class with Mansie; but Mansie beats them all in compactness and completeness, and has elevations of ideality about him which Galt could not reach. The immortal tailor remains an original.

In the spring of 1826 we find Andrew Picken, an ingenious young man, belonging to the neighbourhood of Musselburgh, consulting Moir about some poetry in manuscript which he wished to publish. Moir gave him considerate advice, and Picken acknowledged it thus:—"I have considered your observations; and it is but a poor compliment to say that I fully acquiesce in their justice, and that, as a necessary consequence, I will *not* throw myself upon the mercy of the world as an author, with all the faults of inexperience on my head. I will defer the hazard till I am better provided for it; and perhaps, in doing so, I may hereafter leave myself less to blush for, when I look back upon my early lucubrations." Whether or not this sensible resolution was fully kept I do not know, nor am I acquainted with the various stages of Picken's history; but we find him very soon afterwards in London as a literary adventurer. *The Dominie's Legacy* was his chief publication. It has no little merit, and gave its author considerable reputation. During a series of years, Picken's applications to Moir for literary help, in one scheme after another,

were manifold and painful. In 1833 (the year after Galt's general health gave way) he writes to Delta thus:—"As to Galt's health, I don't think it nearly so bad as he does himself, or as is given out, now that I have got used to his complaints. Depend upon it, he will last a considerable time yet, and write a great deal more, but not, I fear, to the increase of his reputation. One thing I have always envied in our admired friend—his remarkable activity of mind, and the capacity of mental labour in the midst of bodily infirmity. I have sometimes also been inclined to envy his indomitable self-confidence, which carries him straight on through everything; but this happy trait has brought with it its peculiar evils. The observation of his character, I confess, has interested and amused me; and I have much to say of him, when time is expedient. His chief failing is that he *will* always be *great*. You are well off, not to depend on literature as it has been of late. I can hardly wonder at Galt's being rather shame-faced about it, and the sort of reputation it brings even to such as he. I have tried to get out of it, and back to mercantile life, but cannot. There's infatuation and poverty in it." Poor Picken! he could not, and did not get out of it. He died very soon thereafter, with the galling harness on his back. One warning more to young men, enforced with all the solemnities of suffering, sorrow, and death!

The following excerpts from some of Moir's letters about this time, may be taken as so far illustrative of his opinions, life, and character :— *To* MACNISH, *17th August* 1827.—"In the development of a story, it is necessary—at least with myself it is so—to have some real facts as grappling-irons wherewith to cling to the memory. The finest imagination cannot possibly invent circumstances which will bear even on the writer's mind—not to say the reader's—with the cogency of facts. Recollect this in getting up a story, and you will assuredly find that I am right." [Thanks to this practical wisdom for the life-like realities of *Mansie.*] *To the same, 11th January* 1828.—"Your *précis* of the relative merits of *Cyril Thornton* and *The Subaltern* is judicious. Gleig is a writer of considerable feeling, shrewd common sense, and extensive observation ; but he is deficient in imagination. He never startles, surprises, or hurries on. We read and are pleased and interested, and we lay down his book with the consciousness that he is a good fellow and a sensible writer. In *Cyril Thornton* the interest is of a higher kind. There are dashes of melancholy, indicative of the lofty imaginative tone of the author's mind ; and, in his pictures of human society and manners, we find many of those slight delicate touches of humour and pathos—for to me both appear only opposite grades in the same scale of sensibility—which show the man of refined feeling and genius. With

Captain Hamilton I have met several times, and admire him much. Unfortunately he has an impediment in speech, highly detrimental to his graces as a social companion; but his fine animated countenance, which reminds you of Byron's heroes, and his black, quick, piercing eye, betoken somewhat of the penetration, richness, and vigour of his mind. Gleig I have never seen. He was in town about a month ago, and I was invited to meet Lockhart and him, but could not accept the invitation." *To a Female Friend, November* 1828.—"I have been bothered with a fearful round of invitations of late; so much so that I was afraid of going home, in the dread of fresh cards lying for me. *Apropos* of dissipation, allow me to refer you to Dr Macnish's book for an account of the melancholy of men of genius. Perhaps to that title I have little claim; and it has been more than once altogether denied me before now. Be that as it may, an opportunity is now suggested of expressing my opinion on a very important subject. To this world's cares I have been by no means a stranger; but, thank God, the degradation of subduing them by application to the solace of stimulants never once entered my heart—I trust it will break before it submits to that. No, no; such a remedy I loathe, hate, abominate, and despise; and I daresay few individuals in society would regret less than I, if every liquid stronger than small beer were exploded for ever. The only remedy from sorrow

which I would ask, is a reciprocal sympathy, and to live in some quiet retirement, away from the silly bustle of the world." *To the same, 23d June* 1828.—"I am not aware that I am much given up to superstitious feelings; but it is not a little curious that, when I awoke last New-Year's morning, it was strongly impressed upon my heart that this was to be the most eventful year of my life—in what shape, of course, I could not decipher; but either for joy or wo." *To the same, 11th February* 1829.—"I had the other day a most friendly and handsome offer from Mr Blackwood, of the editorship of the *Quarterly Journal of Agriculture.* He also strongly recommended me to settle as a medical practitioner in Edinburgh, where himself and his friends would exert themselves in getting me into practice. From the present situation of my affairs, however, I thought it prudent, after weighing the matter well, to decline the offered kindness." *To the same, 29th March* 1829.—"We are all here totally engrossed (speaking in a public sense) with the Catholic question. We have had a meeting to petition against concessions, at which Mr Aitchison of Linkfield was elected president, and myself secretary."

The advice to Moir to remove to Edinburgh was often renewed by Mr Blackwood, and also by his sons: their confidence in his professional ability, and their sanguine hopes of his success in the wider field proposed, a desire also to have him

nearer them, made them very urgent in the matter. Dr Abercrombie, one of Moir's most cordial friends, pressed him with the same advice, and offered him his zealous support in event of his coming to Edinburgh. Moir was too wise in the business of life to be guided by mere sentiment and feeling in a deliberation of this kind; still, "man does not live by bread alone," and I have no doubt that our poet's unwillingness to leave the rural scenes of his early days, and his desire to live and die among his own people—a desire very strong in natures such as his—had their share in determining him to remain where he was. A motive higher and better still had sway in the case. "We have strong grounds for believing," says *Blackwood's Magazine*, "that a higher and better motive induced him to refrain from abandoning the scene of his early labours, and permanently joining, in the metropolis of Scotland, that social circle which contained many of his dearest friends. He could not bring himself to forsake his practice in a locality where the poor had a claim upon him. During the terrible visitations of the cholera, which were unusually, and, indeed, unprecedentedly severe in the parish to which he belonged, Moir was night and day in attendance upon the sufferers. He undertook, with more than the enthusiasm of youth, a toil and risk which he might well have been excused delegating to other hands; and often has the morning found him watching by the bed of

some poor inmate of a cottage whom the arrow of the pestilence had stricken. That any man with the brilliant prospects which were undoubtedly presented to Moir, and certainly within his reach, should nevertheless have preferred the hard and laborious life of a country practitioner, must appear inexplicable to those who did not know the tenderness of his heart and the exquisite sympathy of his nature. Of his profession he took a high estimate. He regarded it less as the means for securing a competency for himself, than as an art which he was privileged to practise for the good of his fellow-men, and for the alleviation of their sufferings; and numerous are the instances which might be cited, though untold by himself, of sacrifices which he made, and dangers which he incurred, in carrying aid and consolation to those who had no other claim upon him except their common humanity. His, indeed, was a life far more devoted to the service of others than to his own personal aggrandisement—a life whose value can only be appreciated now, when he has been called to receive his reward in that better world, the passport to which he sought so diligently—in youth as in manhood, in happiness as in sorrow—to obtain."

Moir's New-Year's morning dream of 1828 was thus far fulfilled, that his heart was finally engaged that year. On the 8th of June 1829 he was married at Carham church, Northumberland, to Miss Catherine E. Bell of Leith. The match was one of

the purest love on both sides; and to both parties, now united, it proved the crowning blessing of their life. The following Poetry starts with an appropriate inscription to C. E. M. It may seem too soon to dash Epithalamium with Dirge; but it serves at least to recall the exquisite beauty of those lines, pathetic in Prophecy, but rendered still more touching by Event:—

> "Accept these trifles, lovely and beloved;
> And haply, in the days of future years,
> While the far past to memory reappears,
> Thou may'st retrace these tablets, not unmoved,
> Catherine! whose holy constancy was proved
> By all that deepest tries, and most endears."

Macnish and Moir were now in close correspondence with each other; but their letters refer mainly to their contributions to the Annuals, *Fraser's Magazine*, and the *Edinburgh Literary Gazette*, and have little general interest. Macnish did not like this system of miscellaneous authorship, and hung back in the harness; but Delta, though he felt the drudgery of it very heavy, continued to cheer on his reluctant companion, and fagged away himself. His services to the *Edinburgh Literary Gazette* were considered so important that, in the end of July 1829, he was presented by the proprietors with a handsome silver jug, in token of their gratitude.

In April 1830 Moir writes thus to Macnish:—"About ten days ago I was highly gratified by a volunteer visit from Dr Bowring. His note said

that, being in Edinburgh, he was much moved towards me, and that Δ had claims upon him not to be gainsaid. He was accompanied by a Mr Johnston, the writer of the leading article ('A Visit to Berzelius') in the last number of *Brewster's Journal*, and who has been his fellow-traveller in Sweden. I was quite delighted with Bowring. He is one of the finest-looking men I ever saw, and full of information, communicativeness, and eloquence. I regretted much that his visit was necessarily so short: he could not dine with us, being engaged to the Professor's, and obliged to set off to the north in a day or two. He is editor of *The Westminster Review*. Are you aware that I am now a father? I suspect not. Well, then, let me inform you that on the 6th of April Mrs Moir presented me with a lovely little daughter. I expect nothing less than a sonnet from you on the occasion. Both mother and child are doing well, which has made me very happy. About a fortnight ago, a young sculptor, Ritchie, a pupil of Thorwaldsen, who has recently come from Rome, and who resides here, asked me to sit for my bust—a condescension to which I gracefully submitted. It is now finished, and off for the Exhibition, which opens next week. All who saw it in the studio were highly pleased with it. He sends along with it busts of Thorwaldsen, Aitchison of Drummore, Lady Susan Hamilton, daughter of the Duke, Lady Macdonald Lockhart, and Professor Bell; the head of a Cupid in

marble also, and a large figure of a Cupid drawing an arrow from his quiver. He is altogether a most promising young person, and likely to carry sculpture to a loftier pitch than has yet been done by any Scotchman. Musselburgh claims him for a native."

Sculpture is the most permanently idealising, and therefore the most difficult and the finest of all the Fine Arts. Rejecting extrinsic circumstances, it seizes on the master feature of the world—and that is the godlike form of man; while by a still severer selection it loves to take him in the heroic ages of deified heroes, when the "lords of the world" were even more than "demigods of fame," giving us the incarnation of human beauty in the upspringing Messenger of Jove, (O rare Thorwaldsen!) or the sun-lighted limbs of the far-darting Apollo, as

"He walks the impalpable and burning sky."

Having chosen the spirit and form of man, in their noblest development, as the subject proper of its creations, by a still austerer taste it rejects, even in its most terrible representations, every violence and exaggeration, dealing only with essential and elementary expressions, even of the fiercest passion: it approves

"The depths and not the tumults of the soul."

Like its sister muse of Greek dramatic poetry, it loves to soften down even the harshest catastrophes

into grace and repose, as the most permanent and affecting expression of human being. The regions of Beauty, and Peace, and Rest, are its chosen regions. To him who has lost a sweet young sister, what a soul-soothing remembrancer is a marble bust of her, so passionless and spiritual of beauty, in the silence of his moonlit chamber. Such were Delta's notions of sculpture: painting he liked, but his love of sculpture was quite a passion. Many a time have I visited Ritchie's studio with him, and seen him enjoy the severely beautiful. Ritchie's bust of our poet did not strike beholders as a strong likeness; but, to a thoughtful eye, the resemblance came gradually out from its chaste reserve. A long look at the dead face of my friend, on that Sabbath morning after his dissolution, as he lay in his fixed serenity, thin, and purged fine, and spiritualised by coming through the fiery furnace, set far off and relieved against "the azure of eternity," made me see how truly like him was the marble bust.

In 1830 appeared *Weeds and Wild-Flowers*, a posthumous volume of prose and poetry by Alexander Balfour, the ingenious and amiable author of "*Campbell, or the Scottish Probationer;*" "*Characters omitted in Crabbe's Parish Register;*" &c. Moir had been for years on a friendly footing with Balfour, giving him literary counsel and medical help down the long decline of his palsied life; and now he wrote a memoir, and prefixed it to the

volume, and edited the collection for the behoof of Mr Balfour's family.

Out of harmony with his usual political connections, and greatly to the surprise of most of his friends, who knew his principles to be essentially Conservative, Mr Moir came out in the spring of 1831 as a zealous advocate of the Reform Bill. In a letter to Macnish he explains his view of the matter thus:—"You have become a Reformer, have you? Well, so have I; and not only that, but secretary to the Reform Committee, in which capacity I have had correspondence with Jeffrey and Lord Rosebery. We were last night brilliantly illuminated, and all went off as smack and smooth as a Quaker meeting. It is absurd to deny the necessity of reform. When a House of Commons could pass a detestable Catholic Bill against the constitution of the country, and the petitions of nineteen-twentieths of its inhabitants, it was quite time that an end should be put to such a delusive mockery of representation."

In the beginning of May of the same year, our author published his *Outlines of the Ancient History of Medicine, being a view of the Progress of the Healing Art among the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, and Arabians.* In his *Life of Macnish*, in 1838, he gives us the following statement regarding this medical history:—"It was undertaken at the suggestion of my distinguished and excellent friend, Mr Galt, and was half intended as one

of the volumes of Colburn and Bentley's *National Library*. On the abandonment of the plan, from an anterior application by one of the publishers to another medical author, the first division of my book was brought out under the title of the *Ancient History of Medicine*. In a subsequent division, it was my intention to have brought down this view of the medical sciences from the Dark Ages to the middle of last century; and then, in a third, to have completed my survey of the subject, by commencing with the nosologies of Sauvages and Cullen, and concluding with an exhibition of the present state of our professional knowledge." These second and third divisions were never written. *The Outlines* were well received by the Faculty, and added very considerably to Moir's reputation among them. Campbell the poet, criticising the work, spoke of it in the following high terms:— "This is a book of great and laborious research, and will be in the hands of every disciple of medicine, and, indeed, of every scholar who wishes to trace up the history of the healing art to the earliest times. It will be valued as long as medicine is cultivated in this country; and the student would do well to master its contents among his initiatory steps in acquiring professional knowledge. Mr Moir has laid the profession of medicine under deep obligations to him for this valuable present."

In October 1831 Moir was presented with the freedom of his native burgh; and a few days

thereafter he makes the following announcement to his friend Macnish;—"Would you believe it? I have been elected a member of our town council; so you must be on your good behaviour when you next visit the 'Honest Town,' or I will lay you by the heels."

Cholera was now upon us. One of its first points of attack in Scotland was Musselburgh, January 1832. The attack was a virulent and mortal one. Moir faced the new and terrible foe with unflinching courage and sleepless zeal—his humane exertions for the poor being quite extraordinary. He had no preconceived theory of the propagation of the disease; but a careful practical investigation of its mode of attack convinced him of its purely contagious character. Being medical secretary of the Board of Health at Musselburgh, the inquiries which he had to answer from all parts of the country, as to the prevention and treatment of the malady, were innumerable; and almost in self-defence, in order to answer if possible once for all, he hurriedly threw together his *Practical Observations on Malignant Cholera.* The pamphlet flew through the country like wildfire, and a second edition was called for a few days after the publication of the first. Our author followed it up with *Proofs of the Contagion of Malignant Cholera.* Even those who differed from him acknowledged these two productions to be among the most masterly that had appeared on his side of the question. The

second visitation of cholera in 1848-9 only confirmed Moir in his doctrine of contagion.

In the autumn of 1832 Delta attended the meeting of the British Association at Oxford, and visited Cheltenham and London. While in London, Mr Fraser, the publisher, got him to sit to Maclise for a full-length etching, which afterwards appeared, with a short biographical notice, in *Fraser's Magazine*. He visited Coleridge, then resident at Highgate with the Gillmans. His interview with "the old man eloquent" is thus described in a note in his *Life of Macnish*:—"Notwithstanding the very delicate state of his health, which confined him to bed, my reception by the poet-philosopher was at once kind and flattering. During two hours of divine monologue, Mr Coleridge gave me, in his own glowing language, the history of much of his early life, and recited some of his juvenile compositions, in a manner which was very characteristic and very striking. Unfortunately—I say unfortunately, for the subject was perhaps much above my unsophisticated comprehension—I put some questions to him relative to his peculiar speculations in philosophy, and shortly found myself lost in intricacies which, although sprinkled with the honey of Hybla, were not more easily threaded than those of the Cretan Labyrinth. In one of his conversations, I see, Mr Coleridge imputes some imitations of his more remarkable compositions (to which I plead guilty) to Dr Maginn, a much abler man. They

were dashed off, twenty years ago, in no unkind spirit; and it is pleasing to know that the author of *Kubla Khan* and *The Ancient Mariner* felt this." Chalmers, we know, was as much bewildered as Moir in the theosophic infinitude of the Highgate philosophy; nor could Carlyle, as we learn from his *Life of John Sterling*, pretend to gauge and measure those wastes of moonshine.

Moir's main object, in his visit to the south, was to see his friend Galt, who was now residing at Brompton, broken down in health. "When we parted, seven years before," says Delta, "he was in the prime and vigour of manhood—his eye glowing with health, and his step full of elasticity. Before me now sat the drooping figure of one old before his time, crippled in his movements, and evidently but half-resigned to this premature curtailment of his mental and bodily exertions. In the treatment of his complaints he had been subjected to much acute pain, and at times his sensations from his ailments were of the most unpleasant kind; yet, when free from these, his eye lightened up with all its wonted vivacity, and his mind evinced all its subtlety, knowledge, and observation. Indeed, he confessed to occasional states of feeling, in which his powers of fancy, intellect, and combination, were much brighter than they ever were in the days of his best health; but these states were unnatural, and could only be looked upon as the results of disease, and as originating in a too excit-

able condition of the nervous system. As a proof of this, they were invariably followed by a corresponding languor and depression; the sunbright glimpses which had been vouchsafed seemed only to serve the unhappy purpose of rendering the encompassing gloom more palpable." Galt's disease was an affection of the spine, drawing on paralysis. He never wholly recovered from it.

In the beginning of 1833 we find Dr Brown retired from business, and Mr Moir now senior, with a junior partner in the practice. Under a consequent increase of his professional responsibility and work, Delta's literary exercises for a while were considerably abridged. In all the public business of his native town, however, he took an enlarged active share. Wherever he was a member of any club or committee, he was sure to be made secretary—such were his talents for business, his willingness to oblige, his readiness to work. With all classes of people in the place, humble and high, he held friendly intercourse. To youthful merit, struggling forward, ever was he ready to lend a helping hand. Mr Ritchie, the sculptor, whose genius and virtue have now raised him to distinction, will thank us for the following instance, so characteristic of his late friend: we take it from one of Delta's letters to Macnish in the end of 1833:—"Ritchie tells me that his purpose in going to Glasgow is to get back his things from the Exhibition, all of which are unsold. Do something

for him, and prevent this. I know you can do it if you like, and it will cost you but little trouble, while you will be conferring a real benefit upon him. The statue of Wallace is valued at only £25. Get Motherwell to put a paragraph in the *Courier* and *Herald*, stating the circumstance of Ritchie having arrived to take away his works, and recommending that a subscription be entered into at the New Exchange for purchasing the Wallace to stand as an appropriate ornament in that building. How soon could fifty half-guineas be thus raised! You may put down my name for one. Get him to do this, and you will really oblige me. If it succeed, I will give you all the credit of having done a service to the Fine Arts, through one of their most deserving and least encouraged cultivators." Here is no mere sentimentalism of friendship; here is sound practical help. Such was the way with Macbeth Moir.

In one of his letters to Delta, Thomas Hood, who was then very unwell, says:—"But for this last shake, I should have indulged hopes of revisiting Edinburgh, and of course Musselburgh. But I am more sedentary than ever—some would say *chairy* of myself—so that, sitting for my bust lately seemed hardly beyond my usual still habits. Luckily, I have always been a domestic bird, and am therefore not so wretched from being incapable of passage. Still I should prefer health and locomotion—riding here and there, to and fro, as you

do, because others were ill and I was not. How you must enjoy walking to set a broken leg!" Any toil of the day were better than poor Hood's mortal ail; yet hear Moir himself as to those medical rides and walks: thus writes he to Macnish:—"Our business has ramified itself so much in all directions of the compass—save the north, where we are bounded by the sea—that on an average I have sixteen or eighteen miles' daily riding; nor can this be commenced before three or four hours of pedestrian exercise has been hurried through. I seldom get from horseback till five o'clock; and by half-past six I must be out to the evening rounds, which never terminate till after nine. Add to this the medical casualties occurring between sunset and sunrise, and you will see how much can be reasonably set down to the score of my leisure." To weary work like this what an aggravation must literary labour have been; and yet what a solace too. Coleridge found poetry "its own exceeding great reward." Delta must have found it still more so. Many a "senate" of midnight storms must he have "deceived" with his thick-coming melodious fancies. The night-wind, that slung the hail against his face, only lent fresh vigour to his heart, inditing its "Hymn to the Night-Wind." Toil, and trouble, and sorrow, he turned them all into song—so tuneful was his nature.

In the spring of 1834 we find Mr Galt in

lodgings in Hill Street, Edinburgh, superintending the publication of his *Literary Miscellanies*, before proceeding to Greenock, where he meant to take up his abode. "I frequently saw him at this time," says Delta, "and more than once drove out with him for a few miles to the country. He was now much thinner, and after a sleepless night his features were hollow and haggard; but, when he engaged in conversation, his eye lighted up as in earlier days, and he became not only placid, but cheerful. There was still the same wakeful industry; his writing materials were ever before him; and around lay the half-finished tale, the outlines of the projected essay, the notes for a new edition, or the recovered manuscript of a former year. To behold any fellow-mortal so circumstanced could not but awaken feelings of melancholy—how much more so when that individual was John Galt! The lodgings taken for Mr Galt were in Hill Street, and his friend Mr Blackwood resided in Ainslie Place, probably not more than a hundred yards off; yet, strange to say, although they had not seen each other for years, it was destined that they were never to see each other again—for Mr Blackwood was then laid on that sick-bed from which he was not to rise. Day after day my professional duties, as well as my friendship, led me to visit each; and it afforded me a melancholy pleasure to carry from the one invalid to the other the courtesies

of mutual regard, and the kindest wishes for restored health." It was a characteristic of the late Mr Blackwood, that his sagacity in detecting the weak points of a story was prompt and unerring; and the natural boldness of the man led him to give the strongest expression to all his opinions. He had laid daring hands on the very crest itself of "The Black Hussar of Literature;" and it was not at all likely that a humbler knight of the pen, like Galt, should escape his interference. Conflict and coldness had been betwixt the two stout-hearted men accordingly. All the more touching now was the renewal of their mutual respect and esteem; and to both of them it must have deepened the satisfaction, that they had such a man as Moir for their inter-running messenger of the reconciling charities. Mr Blackwood died in the end of autumn; Mr Galt lingered on for years, dying by inches.

About the close of the year 1834 we find Moir writing to Macnish thus:—"An old Indian sergeant, John Gordon, has a son in the Glasgow Infirmary, by name Walter Gordon, who, by his own account, poor fellow, must be in a bad way from dropsical disease—probably symptomatic of diseased chest. The old man called upon me last night, to ask me to write any friend in Glasgow to visit his son, and advance him as much as would bring him down by the canal. Do this for me. A few shillings will be all that is required. Let me

have a note of it along with Gordon, and I will remit it to you immediately."

In the same letter Moir says to Macnish—"I do not think I told you that Mr Blackwood left me one of the executors for his family—indeed, the only one out of the circle of his relatives." This simple statement sufficiently indicates the general confidence which Mr Blackwood reposed in Mr Moir's judgment and virtue. He had found him more than a sound literary adviser, and called him to the sacred office of family guardianship. The sons of Mr Blackwood, who inherited many of their father's eminent qualities, were not the men to let go their father's friends; and successive years only knit them more closely to Mr Moir and his family.

The following is the last excerpt to be given from Moir's correspondence with Macnish:—"*2d February* 1835.—Professor Wilson dines with me on Friday, and remains all night. I saw him last week—fierce as a tiger, and bold as a lion. He has had his hands full of work lately, at the Speculative Society dinner, the Celtic Ball, The Peebleian Society, &c.; and next week he is croupier at the public dinner to Lord Ramsay and Mr Learmonth. Lord Ramsay is likely to turn out one of our Scottish stars. He has read much, thought well, and has an admirable facility in expressing himself. I met him last week at a private dinner party, and altogether liked his mode of conducting himself. His feelings are

quite Scottish, notwithstanding his Oxford education; and he seems one of the very few now extant of the Scottish nobility who carry in their hearts the old national predilections."

The year 1835 closed on the new-made grave of the Ettrick Shepherd. Delta's personal and epistolary intercourse with him had been limited; but, as brother poets of *Blackwood*, singing harmoniously together, their regard for one another had always been strong. Hogg had indited and addressed the following verses to his fair-haired kinsman of the lyre: they are published here for the first time:—

TO Δ, ON HIS BIRTHDAY,

JANUARY 5.

The infant year with clouds was crowned,
And storms defaced the early morn,
While hoarse the tempest growled around,
As thou, the child of song, wert born.

The blood-red sun, with brazen rim,
Scowled angry o'er the eastern main;
The wild blast sung thy cradle hymn,
As it swept along the wintry plain.

What thoughts were thine, when first thy ear
Did list this music of the sky?
Did thy young bosom shrink with fear,
And tremble as the storm went by?

'Tis said—and gossips hold the tale,
Which to deny were mortal wrong—
Upon the world thy infant wail
Came piping in a note of song.

Suit and service of the heart, simple and sweet! The deeper was Delta's regret when the Shepherd was taken away.

"Ah! surely nothing dies but something mourns."

But when the Poet of the peculiar wilderness—the very Genius of its hills and streams—departs, what does not mourn? Snow-storms may fall winter after winter on Ettrick or Yarrow; but centuries won't give us such another *Shepherd's Calendar*, to keep white and deep the immortal drift. "The Green Silent People" may still linger on the dim heart of Eld; but the last laureate of the fairies is gone for ever, and mortal man shall never again see and sing them, as they flit among the moonlit ferns of the southern slope,

"Or dance their ringlets to the whistling wind."

Ah, Hogg! ah, James! we miss you sadly. Lads and lasses may still be young and blithe on those hills, but Yarrow and Ettrick are no more Yarrow and Ettrick to the generation that knew thee; or rather, they are more so than ever, in their native character of lonely sorrow—something deeper and far beyond

"The grace of forest charms decayed,
And pastoral melancholy."

Much about the same time died William Motherwell, author of "Jeannie Morrison," and Michael

Scott, author of *Tom Cringle's Log* and *The Cruise of the Midge*—like his famous namesake, also a magician. Motherwell and I sat side by side at the public dinner given to Hogg at Peebles the preceding season. One short year, and both of them are now in the dust. Michael Scott's literary career was a brief but striking one. Totally unsuspected in his power, out he burst, late in life, as some one said of Swift, "like the Irish Rebellion, forty thousand strong." He had been a mercantile man in the West Indies, cruising about much, but never a professional seaman. Blackwood and Wilson were amazed that a man of the west, whom they wotted not of, could pour such brilliant broadsides down the columns of *Maga*. Scott had been at school with Wilson; and now, either in audacious waggery, or in modest desire to give a trail of himself, that he might be hunted down to his due fame, he ventured, in the Magazine, within the charmed ring of school-boy reminiscences, and brought out some peculiar points to the Professor's recollection. "Aut Michael aut Diabolus," said Wilson. The Wizard was caught. Yet such was the rare modesty of the man, in keeping his manhood to himself, that the Glasgow people were never altogether sure about the authorship of *Tom Cringle;* and Michael Scott slid into his grave without the public ever seeming to be aware of it. Delta admired Motherwell's ballads. Of Michael Scott he says:—"Lockhart,

in a note in the *Quarterly*, had taken occasion to designate the chapters of *Tom Cringle* as the most brilliant that had ever adorned the pages of a magazine; and Coleridge, in his *Table Talk*, had pronounced them most excellent; but although the reading public seemed unanimously to concur in these plaudits, he from whose mind those grand imaginings emanated was allowed to remain a mere name, without any local habitation. We hope that this stigma will be removed by some friend of the late Michael Scott, and that the justice may be paid to his memory which was denied to himself. We love Marryat, and admire Cooper; but Michael is the master-spirit of the sea."

Our esteemed friend, Dr Macnish, died on the 16th of January 1837, in the thirty-fifth year of his age—"in the bloom of his fame," says Delta, "as well as of his professional usefulness; a man who could not be known without being beloved, and whom Scotland may well be proud to number among her gifted children. To none beyond the circle of his own hearth could his death be a greater bereavement than to me; for, from the day of our introduction together, we had continued to pour our hearts into each other, and I loved him, as David loved Jonathan, with almost more than a brother's love." Delta collected his friend's fugitive pieces, and published them with a Life of Macnish. The *melange* is one of great merit. The

Life itself is written in a fine spirit, and the style is flowing and easy; but, as a whole, it is somewhat diffuse and loose of texture.

Apropos of biography, it may here be mentioned, without particularising dates or order of appearance, that Delta contributed Memoirs of the late Mr Rennie of Phantassie, and Sir John Sinclair, to the *Journal of Agriculture*, and wrote a biographical sketch of Admiral Sir David Milne.

In February 1838 Mr and Mrs Moir lost two beautiful children—Charles Bell, aged four and a half years, and William Blackwood, aged fifteen months. Another fine boy, David Macbeth Moir, was cut off the following year. "The desolation among my little ones," said the bereaved father in a letter to myself, "has proved to me a very staggering blow."

"The shaft flew thrice, and thrice *his* peace was slain."

"Death is a stern teacher," says he in another letter, written some months afterwards, "but I am now a subdued disciple."

Mr Galt died on the 11th of April 1839, and was buried in the family burying-ground in the new churchyard of Greenock. "No one," says Delta, in his able Memoir of his friend, published two years afterwards, "was more unselfish in pecuniary matters; and although his income was always laboriously won, it was ever open-heartedly spent. In all with whom he became acquainted he inspired

a feeling of attachment; and, even when at the height of his literary reputation and worldly success, he was as unaffected and sincere as his own Micah Balwhidder. Mr Galt was not only a man of untiring industry, but of strong and original powers. These were, of course, less shown in his earlier works of research—as his Lives of Wolsey and West; or of observation—as his *Commercial Travels* and *Letters from the Levant.* Many people could have written these, acute, intelligent, and meritorious as they are; but who could have supplied *The Legatees, The Annals,* or *The Provost?* In these his natural genius, for the first time, found "ample room and verge enough;" and on these it has left its peculiar impress. They are less compositions than outpourings of the mind; less like the waters pumped up from the well than the spontaneous gushes of the fountain. His conception was strong and vivid, his fancy graphic and picturesque, and his judgment generally acute. But he was not always free from prejudices, and occasionally allowed these to warp his reasoning powers; nor was his taste to be depended on. But however imperfect in some particulars his mind might be, there is no denying that it was framed in a large mould: in its designs and its accomplishments it was great; and though in the latter it might occasionally fail, the failure was never a puny, but always a splendid one."

"A few days ago"—thus writes Moir to me,

in the autumn of 1839—"I had a visit from Mr Warren, the author of the *Physician's Diary*. He has an enthusiastic temperament and a warm heart, and is really a fine fellow. He is now immersed in law pursuits; and, as with many others, so with him, his first work is likely to be his greatest and his best. It was truly a hit. It has extended his reputation, not only through France and Germany, but, as a lady from Moscow informed me, to the most northern extremities of Europe. The instant his separate tales came out in *Blackwood*, translators both at St Petersburg and Moscow were at their tasks; and all the theatres strove which to be first to have him on the stage."

Early in 1843 'Delta circulated privately, and then published, his *Domestic Verses*. To myself he thus wrote on the subject:—"To you, who seem perfectly to appreciate those little poems, their causes, and the feelings that engendered them, I need say nothing. Selfishness, probably—in a view in which Thomas Carlyle might regard that word—might be the immediate object of their collection. If so, I trust that the aim was a very sinless one, as the sympathy was to be circumscribed by the bounds of personal friendship; and I hoped that those who knew me best would not be the least inclined to look over their effects on my heart and imagination. In succession, however, I received letters from Wordsworth,

Mrs Southey, Lockhart, Trench, Tennyson, White, Warren, Dickens, Montgomery, Whewell, Ferrier, and many others, which left me no grounds for refusing to make my little book a publication. Above all, a letter from Lord Jeffrey—so extraordinary in its contents and praises—took away from me all excuse, and I have acceded to the request of the Blackwoods to throw my private feelings upon the *mare magnum* of public opinion. To the *Domestic Verses* I have appended a dozen or fourteen lyrics of an elegiac character, so as to extend the *brochure* to a hundred and fifty or a hundred and eighty pages. At all events, it will be a reminiscence of me in the minds of my literary friends." Hood was one of those who wrote to Moir in reference to the *Domestic Verses*. He says—"I am a confirmed invalid for the rest of my life; and, like Dogberry, 'I have had my losses too.' All such losses time may amend—except that of my health. But, in spite of that conviction, I am no hypochondriac, and make the best approach I can to what is called 'enjoying bad health.' It has concerned me to find that, in the same interval, you have not been without your afflictions. But, in all domestic bereavements, I comfort myself with the belief that love, in its pure sense, is as immortal as the soul itself—not given to us in vain; but to form a part of that eternal happiness which would not be complete without it. It has pleased

God hitherto to spare me trials of the kind. I have one son and one daughter—good, clever, and affectionate; and I feel strongly that my domestic happiness has kept me so long alive." Mr Barry Cornwall wrote thus:—"Your verses are very touching and sincere. The second poem (to 'Casa') gave me much pain, for it made fresh to me a great loss which I sustained some years ago, and one that I am obliged to try not to think of—even now. I wish to God that we could love our children moderately; but they twine themselves round our hearts so closely, that we forget what tender things they really are, and rest all our hopes upon them."

In 1844 Mr Moir was elected a member of the kirk-session of Inveresk. During the remainder of his life he discharged the office with exemplary fidelity. He had a profound veneration for the Church of Scotland, as one of the greatest of our national blessings; and was ever ready, side by side with his able and esteemed pastor and friend, Mr Beveridge, to take part in any public meeting, the object of which was to strengthen the Establishment.

In this same year, 1844, we find Mr Moir suffering from some internal inflammation. With his usual disregard of self, and sensitive dislike to have the attention of strangers directed to him, he had very imprudently sat a whole night in his wet clothes by the bed-side of a patient. The illness thus brought on was of the severest

character, and gave his nervous system a shock from which he never wholly recovered.

Delta was present at the Burns Festival, at Ayr, in the autumn of 1844. He took no part in the proceedings of the day, though he was specially invited to attend; but he did ample duty on the occasion by his commemorative poem, published in *Blackwood*. It is a noble piece, and will carry the duty down through all time. There is a point of reference to it in the following extract of a letter, written by him to myself a month or two thereafter:—"My days, and sometimes my nights, are absorbed in professional hurry; and often for a week at a time I cannot answer a single letter—my only opportunity for reading at these times being a book in my phaeton. With the exception of the lines to Burns, and another little piece, I do not remember another product of my muse for the last twelve months. *Apropos* of the lines to Burns, they have been popular probably beyond any other thing that I have ever written, and have been republished in fifty different quarters. I was quite startled by your notice of Sterling's death. I never had heard of his illness, and his death was a wrench to my humanity. Poor fellow! I quite agree with you in your estimate of his powers. He seemed to write more from effort than impulse—he has more rhetoric than inspiration—and is deficient in nature and tenderness."

The following letter was addressed to the Rev. William B. Cunningham, Free Church minister, Prestonpans, on the loss of his son, a fine boy, whom Mr Moir had attended in his illness :—

"MUSSELBURGH, *8th January* 1845.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Allow me to return you my very best thanks for the handsome and most acceptable present you have made me of Adam Smith's Baskerville's Milton—one of the greatest of our authors, in the finest specimen of typography—and which must have been pored over by the veritable eyes of the great founder of political economy.

"The gift has only one drawback: Would, so far, as our weak eyes can see, that it had been ordained that I should receive it from other hands than yours. This was not to be, and for wise purposes, although we see them not. The loss and the grief are to those who are left behind: to him these cannot be. Yet a little while, and the end cometh to us also; and we, who would detain those we love, ourselves almost as quickly go.

"Please also to return my best thanks to Mrs Cunningham for her kind memorial to me of my dear departed little friend. I shall read it with the attention and care which I have no doubt it deserves, and hope to derive from it many bettering influences.

"Speaking from sad experience, a long time must yet elapse ere you and she will be able to look back

on your deprivation with philosophic and unimpassioned minds, or be able to dissever the what must be from the what might have been. But when that time does come, you will find that the lamentation for an innocent child is a thornless sorrow, and that the steadfast faith, through the Redeemer, of meeting him again, and for ever, can lend a joy to grief.

"Believe me, my dear Sir, ever most truly and affectionately yours, D. M. MOIR."

In a memorandum addressed to Mr Moir's son-in-law, Dr Scott of Musselburgh, in connection with the transmission of this letter, Mr Cunningham thus speaks of Mr Moir's style and manner in the chamber of sickness:—"In our late brief talk about a life so even and tranquil as that of our beloved friend, Delta, I reminded you of what I had previously mentioned regarding the lively and lasting impressions made on my own mind by the peculiar brightness and precision of his medical intellect. Though I have frequently had the happiness of knowing members of your profession, who have united manifold accomplishments of mind with general excellence in medical knowledge and practice, I cannot at this moment recall any instance of so great power of graphic delineation of disease and method of treatment as that which he possessed. As free from pedantic minuteness and false emphasis as from dry, barren generalities of

statement, he had in no small measure the happy talent of investing his most severe details with an interest borrowed from his spirit of picturesque and pleasant observation. Occasionally, his explanations of the origin of disagreeable sensations, and the modes of their ready removal, were so simple, direct, and vivid, as almost to suggest the fancy that the practised eye of the poet or painter had usurped the function of the scientific observer. And thus an interest peculiarly charming, and which was felt in many a sick room—the blended result of the most beautiful and rigid science in discerning the order of the facts, and of imaginative genius in their impressive exhibition—was associated with his briefest and most familiar conversations of a strictly professional kind. Allow me to add that, in reflecting, as I now earnestly reflect, on the warm, unbroken, familiar friendship which, during sixteen years of mingled joy and sorrow within the domestic circles of both of us, I had the precious privilege to enjoy, I am more and more impressed by the spirit of serene beauty which pervaded his whole character."

Mr Moir writes me thus in 1845 :—"12*th April.* —After all, how precarious a thing is literary fame! Things to which I have bent the whole force of my mind, and which are worth remembering—if any things that I have done are at all worth remembering—have attracted but a very doubtful share of applause from critics; while things dashed

off, like *Mansie Wauch*, as mere sportive freaks, and which for years and years I have hesitated to acknowledge, have been out of sight my most popular productions. When does Gilfillan's volume come out? He is a powerful and eloquent writer; but he loses his authority somewhat by a tone of exaggeration—mighty things and mean being too much mingled. The fault, however, is one of exuberance, not of sterility, and will soften down by years and experience. Charles Mackay has a volume of poems in the press at Edinburgh, of what stamp I know not. Aytoun is to me by far the greatest Scottish poet of promise. His ballad, 'The Burial March of Dundee,' is magnificent. I would almost as soon be the author of it as of 'Lochiel's Warning,' and I do not see how I could readily say more. Some ballads in last *Fraser* appear to me to smack of him. Of course you are aware that he is the author of the *Book of Comic Ballads*, published recently by Orr of London. Theodore Martin had a hand in them, but I believe they are principally Aytoun's. Martin I have met. He seems a shrewd, clever fellow. Mrs Moir and her little baby are going on very well. Could you believe it?—five sons and five daughters to have been born to us! Yet such is the fact. And something curious connected with the dates of birth is, that Elizabeth, our eldest child, has the same birthday as our youngest one: both daughters, and exactly half a generation between." 21*st October*.—" Robert

Chambers has been residing in Musselburgh during the summer, and I have seen a good deal of him. He is a very excellent person, unaffected, sincere, and warm-hearted, of strong natural talents, and possessing a memory for dates and circumstances quite astounding. The range of his information is wide, and few are to be met with who have such a competent amount of knowledge on such a variety of subjects, literary and scientific."

A sore mishap befel Mr Moir in the beginning of summer, 1846. He was on his way, with a small party of friends in a phaeton, to visit Borthwick Castle, when the horse took fright and ran off, and at last went smash with the vehicle over a low wall. The party were dashed out upon the ground. None of them, however, was much hurt, except Mr Moir himself, who received a severe injury in one of his hip-joints. It confined him for months, and made him lame for life. His general health was impaired, and he was a good deal dispirited; but he bore up, and resumed his professional duties as speedily as possible. In November following, though still weak, and suffering much pain in his limb, he took a share in the proceedings at the inaugural opening of the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution. Archbishop Whateley, Professor Wilson, Professor Nichol, Mr Macaulay, and other distinguished men, were present. Mr Moir's part in the programme was to propose Mr Macaulay's

health. He was introduced to Macaulay in the course of the evening.

Early in 1847 Delta writes to me thus:—"I am still very lame from the effects of my accident, and am, I fear, never likely to be again a sound man. *Transeat!* It cannot be helped; and I endeavour to follow the advice of St Paul, and be contented with whatever may cast up. I have no wish to live a day longer than the last one in which I can be useful to my fellow-creatures." The following letter to his accomplished friend, Mrs Alexander, formerly of Dalkeith, but now resident in England, is a characteristic one:—

"MUSSELBURGH, 17*th March* 1847.

"DEAR MRS ALEXANDER,—I was much pleased on hearing from you about a fortnight ago, and resisted my first impulse of making Elizabeth answer you, in the hope that, in the course of a day or two, I might myself find time to do so. Such, however, has not been the case. Since the commencement of this year, we have had such an inundation of sickness over an area of some sixteen by twenty miles, that it has been barely *overtakeable*—if there be such a word. Indeed, my weekly journeyings (for I have had the curiosity to sum up for a few weeks) have been on the average two hundred and twenty miles—taking no account whatever of my pedestrian peregrina-

tions. The consequence is that, when evening comes, instead of being able for any study, save a newspaper, I am fit for nothing but bed; for my lameness is still much greater than I could wish, and, I am afraid, not more likely to be ever got entirely rid of. This to me, who must necessarily walk much, is a sad drawback; but I trust I may come to

'The years that bring the philosophic mind.'

"For several months past I have been very wishful to hear of you, and how you had got through the winter; but your 'whereabouts' seemed uncertain, and several inquiries terminated in some generality of Bath or Cheltenham. A few days, however, before receiving your letter, I had applied to Mrs G——, through Miss C——, and had got your address. Your own account of yourself is not altogether flattering; but now, when spring is again setting in, and 'winter is over and gone,' I fondly trust you will get better and stronger. I am delighted to learn that at Exeter you have found out and resumed intercourse with the friends of other days—although to some minds (my own, for instance,) such *reunions* have almost as much in them of pain as of pleasure; for, as Maturin says,

'Of joys long past how painful the remembrance!'

and one cannot help contrasting the what they were then with what they are now.

"You allude to the opening of the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution. I cannot help thinking that the managers did me a great, and certainly an unexpected honour, in asking me to take such a prominent part in that celebration. And it was a gratifying thing, indeed, to find myself associated with such distinguished men as I found seated on either side of me. But as to the matter of a speech, alack-a-day! I was really very unwell at the time—as thin as a whipping-post, and daily forced to have recourse to the warm bath, from the pain in my limb; so, though something like a speech was prepared, and duly committed, such was my exhaustion and nervousness, that all I could manage, without the risk of literally breaking down, was the mere commencement and the ending—the middle, or body, being still as good as manuscript. Be this as it may, however, Mr Macaulay, who was sitting two from me, leaned over afterwards, and courteously thanked me, for the (as he said) undeserved kind things I had been pleased to say of him. His own speech was a magnificent one, both in matter and delivery.

"I am glad to say that all my many little ones have been keeping remarkably well during this severe winter, as has also Mrs Moir—whose inexhaustible attention and devotion to me, by night and by day, through three months of suffering and confinement to bed, make me humbly feel myself

a poor creature in comparison. Elizabeth still continues to go three days weekly to Edinburgh, and has made very considerable advances in Italian, German, and French. She also draws well; and so pleased is her music teacher with her progress, that, to her consternation, he is publishing a set of Scottish airs with a dedication to his pupil. Robert is attending Greek, Latin, and mathematics at college, and German with Dr Nachot, and is going on very well. He must soon now turn his mind to the business of life. There is the church, and medicine. I should almost like the former for him, but fear his bent is towards the latter. He shall have his will. Catherine, Anne Mary, and Jane, are all attending school. The first shows rather a musical bias, having of her own accord picked up some tunes on the piano. Anne Mary shows the same devotion to reading; morning, noon, and night, nothing but a book—a book! Her health, however, is keeping good, and she is full of life and animation. The little Professor (John Wilson) is healthy and strong; and Emily is running about, and chatting like a magpie: there is no truth in phrenology, if she be deficient in the organ of language. So you see we are, taken in the lump, a very astonishing family! Elizabeth will write you soon, my sheet being filled.

"Believe me, dear Mrs Alexander, ever most truly yours,

"D. M. MOIR."

As all Mr Moir's children then in life are named in this letter, it may be mentioned that another son was born on the 5th of August following, and called Oswald. This was the last of the family. Eleven children in all blest the poet's marriage—those who were prematurely cut off having, in the sanctities of sorrow, lent their due share in the blessing to father and mother; for,

> "'Tis better to have loved and lost,
> Than never to have loved at all."

We notice, too, in the letter just quoted, a confession of that pensive tenderness of feeling, in reverting to scenes of early life, which runs through all Delta's poetry, giving it to many readers a sort of conventional sameness. The incidental acknowledgment in the letter shows that it was no mere poetic formula with him, but a true living vein. In a branch of the same vein, he loves to chasten the beauty and joy of the present with thoughts of coming decay and death. This was in him not that affected sadness of youth, touched on the quick by Wordsworth with such an exquisite probe—

> "In youth we love the darksome lawn,
> Brushed by the owlet's wing;
> Then, twilight is preferred to dawn,
> And autumn to the spring:
> Sad fancies do we then affect,
> In luxury of disrespect
> To our own prodigal excess
> Of too familiar happiness."

In Delta, rather, it was that true manhood, so full of reverential trembling sensibilities toward the mysterious fountains and issues of our being—that noble-heartedness spoken of by Jean Paul Richter:—"Nothing recalls the close of life to a noble-hearted young man so much as precisely the happiest and fairest hours which he passes. Gottreich, in the midst of the united beauty and fragrance of the flowers of joy, even with the morning star of life above him, could not but think on the time when the same should appear to him as the evening star, warning him of sleep."

Charles Dickens presided at the opening of the Glasgow Athenæum in the end of 1847. Sheriff Alison, Professors Aytoun and Gregory, Colonel Mure of Caldwell, George Combe, and Robert Chambers, were among the speakers. The distinguished guests of the evening were proposed; and Delta, who was present, was enthusiastically called upon to reply. "I do believe," he said, after the usual courtesies of acknowledgment, "that there is no nation in the world which has greater cause to rejoice than this. With a hungry soil beneath our feet, with a bitter sky over our heads, and with stormy seas around us, we have contrived to enjoy all the luxuries of the sunny south. To our merchants and our mariners we owe it, that the products of the most distant climes can be imported to us, and, when manufactured into the finest tissue, by the wonderful economy of our

processes, can again be exported to undersell the natives in their own markets. During the last thirty years, when circumstances have enabled men to cultivate the arts of peace, how many millions have been added to the population of Great Britain! how many thousands of acres have been reclaimed from the waste, so that it may almost be said that 'the solitary place has been made to rejoice, and the desert to blossom as the rose!' But, mighty as have been our triumphs over physical difficulties, still more mighty, and still more important, have been our intellectual and our moral triumphs. It is because of her parochial economy that Scotland has for centuries been celebrated. It is no boast, on the part of the humblest mechanic in our workshops, and peasant in our fields, that they can read and write and cipher, but a disparagement and disgrace if they cannot. Hence it is that, under circumstances apparently the most hopeless, men have started up from time to time among us, and attained a high place in literature, science, and the arts. Poetry raised Robert Burns from the plough, Allan Cunningham from the quarry, and James Hogg from the shepherd's shieling. Lord Campbell was born in a parish manse, so was Sir David Wilkie; and in every town and village in Scotland you will find that men have risen from the humblest ranks of life. About sixty years ago there could have been pointed out, on the streets

of Edinburgh, three boys, of whom one was the future Lord Jeffrey, the prince of critics; another, Lord Brougham, the most extraordinary man that has sat on the woolsack since the days of Bacon; and the third, a greater than either, the author of *Marmion* and *Waverley*—the man who, to use the words of Thomas Campbell, 'has more completely conquered Europe by his pen than ever Napoleon did by his sword.'" Moir was not indifferent to applause; but his best joy of the evening must have been his meeting with Dickens—such was their cordial regard for one another.

In 1848 Mr Moir was appointed to represent the burgh of Annan in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. The office and honour were conferred upon him every succeeding year, during the remainder of his life. The following are passages from some of his letters of 1848:—

To DAVID VEDDER, *15th January.*—"Very many thanks for *The Pictorial Gift-Book*, and the kind note by which it was accompanied. It is a very beautiful volume, both in pictorial embellishment and poetical illustration, and I have derived much pleasure from it. My favourite among the lithographs is 'Shakspeare;' it has all the depth and effect of line engraving. Among the verses, my favourites are, 'To Frederick the Great,' 'The Aurora-Borealis,' and 'Love at First Sight.' All are, however, worthy of your pen—to whose productions, for many years, I have been no stranger.

Your own case I understand to be one very similar to my own. In early youth I had many aspiring feelings to dedicate my life to literature, and to literature alone; but I thank God—seeing what I have seen in Galt, in Hogg, in Hood, and other friends—that I had resolution to resolve on a profession, and to make poetry my crutch, and not my staff. I have, in consequence, lost the name which, probably, with due exertion, I might have acquired; but I have gained many domestic blessings which more than counterbalance it, and I can yet turn to my pen, in my short intervals of occasional relaxation, with as much zest as in my days of romantic adolescence. I am delighted to see that a similar frame of mind is your own; and that, from the roughnesses and the prose of life, you have also an elysium, 'by Fancy's fingers drest,' into which you can on occasions retire. That this may ever remain to you, and that everything good may attend you and yours, is my very sincere wish." *To Myself, April* 2.—"These are strange times. France is on the edge of a volcano. It is delightful to think that the demonstrations at Glasgow, Edinburgh, London, and Manchester, only prove how sound our own country is at the core. Not a human being within the verge of respectability had anything to do with these abortive outbreaks—thanks to our own true religion! And a curse on the heads of all the pseudo-philosophers, who would so fain mislead the

vain, the presumptuous, and the ignorant! As to the stuff uttered by clever lunatics like Emerson, the thing is to be deplored. But wherever such men unhinge a belief, they must in some degree answer at the bar of conscience for the consequences. I have had an opportunity more than once of conversing with Lord Jeffrey regarding Emerson, and was pleased to find that we were at one in our opinion. Depend upon it, whenever a writer is obscure, he is weak; and when you do come to a hidden meaning, it is not worth knowing. I spent a delightful hour with Dickens about a month ago. He is a genius of the right stamp, fresh and clear." *To Mrs A——, 12th August.*—"What a little time brings forth! You may indeed wonder at knowing that poor Elizabeth is a married wife, and that I have a son-in-law. Under other circumstances I might have *boggled;* but, if a separation was to take place, it could not be in a gentler form—as she was still to be our neighbour—almost one of our family, and as her interests in life were still to continue one with our own. Of the honour, integrity, talent, and sound moral and religious principles of her husband, I had long been convinced, from these having been put to the test on many trying occasions, and never found wanting; and, excepting on the score of her youth, I could not have, and had no objections. A year of probation alone was required of them; and, at its expiry, they were united—I trust, to be long happy

in each other, and to spend lives of usefulness and virtue. The kindness that has been shown, and the attentions that have been heaped upon them, have been altogether extraordinary, and have been a source of wonder no less than of gratitude to her mother and myself. You will be sorry to learn that I am still lame from the effects of my accident, and now likely ever to remain so. But I am thankful to say I suffer little pain, although the defect in my locomotive powers is a sad drag on me professionally. No doubt, 'for some sin to this sorrow was I doomed;' but I repine not, for I have many blessings still, for all of which, I trust, I have a grateful heart. Mrs Moir has, for the last two years, enjoyed very good health—indeed, has been less ailing than for many years before; and all our eight children frisk in happiness about us, and we love them all so much that it is impossible to love one of them more than another. Robert has made choice of the medical profession, and last winter commenced his curriculum at the University. He has grown a great big fellow, and for several seasons has rejoiced in a *long coat*, that badge of manhood and earnest wish of those who know not manhood's cares. Last week Mrs Moir and I, after seven years' meditation on the subject, at length effected our escape from the trammels of home for two days and a half. But you can have no idea what can be done in two days and a half, by those who are in a hurry. We did wonders.

Leaving Edinburgh at mid-day, we dined at Penrith, and slept at Keswick; spent the following day in seeing the Lakes, from Derwentwater to Windermere, (without seeing Wordsworth;) and, on the third, found a long round home by Kendal and Carlisle, Newcastle and Berwick—a distance of two hundred and seventy miles—between sunrise and sunset; leaving ourselves in doubt, when we had got home to bed, whether the sense of toil or of pleasure predominated. However, we saw much to remember and to think of—and of this not the least was the tomb of Southey, from which we brought home with us grass and wild-flowers. As the extent of our medical practice still remains undiminished, little leisure falls (probably happily) to my lot. That leisure I always devote to literature. My present task is a collected edition of Mrs Hemans' works, with notes, which will appear before the end of the year, in a companion form with the single-volume editions of Scott, Byron, Wordsworth, and Crabbe. You are probably aware that the copyright of her poems belongs to the Blackwoods, for whom, some years ago, I edited the edition in seven volumes." *To Myself, 13th August.*—"I spent lately a most pleasant afternoon with George Cruickshank, and found him quite the person I had prefigured. Professor Wilson, Douglas Cheape, and Stephens, dined with me ten days ago. The Professor remained all night; and I had a long two-handed crack with him

after all had left us. He retains all his original vigour. In spite of my wish to the contrary, I have, during the last three years, been drawn into several societies—the Medico-Chirurgical, the Harveian, the Antiquarian, and the Highland." Moir was also a member of the Musselburgh Golf Club. *To the same, 19th November.*—"I see you are all against me on the cholera question; but, unless I am a monomaniac, depend upon it you are all wrong. Every fact which has occurred since the new eruption forms a link in the chain of my evidence. To all the localities where cholera has appeared, the traces of its importation are nearly demonstrable; nor one whit less evident is its spread from one part of these localities to another by contact. Many thousand human lives, however, must, I fear, be sacrificed to the demon of the air ere the real truth be acknowledged and acted on. I bide my time."

In this "nation of shopkeepers," as Napoleon termed us, the purely literary man is looked upon as a sort of adventurer, and has no recognised status in society. The loose irregular lives of too many of our "wits" of bygone generations, when it was thought that there could scarcely be spirit and genius without waywardness and unholy liberties—a folly of estimate which poor Burns was not altogether free from—have certainly not helped to mend the matter. Still, if a literary man behave properly, he will find himself in England no mere

nomadic outcast. To make no exacting assertion of the claims of literature, on the one hand, and steadily to take his stand by it, on the other, as a worthy calling, and his sole fortune, is, for the literary man, to do right, and to take sufficient rank. And go where he will, in out of the way places and odd corners of the country, he will always find something of personal affection, in people whom he has never seen before, mixed up with his public reputation. This is the best part of it, and may well make him happy. Such, in an interesting comparison of notes between Dickens and Moir in 1848, was stated by the former to be a rule and result of his professional life of literature. Like everything about him, the rule is a manful one, and the result honourable. It was the way with Moir, who was composite of business and letters, to take his place in general company as an ordinary professional person. If he was addressed, however, as a man of literature, and had additional attention paid to him as such, he never disclaimed the character and the honour. Unlike a certain set of gentlemen authors, who affect to be above their pursuit, he was too sincere for that. His rule was the same manful rule as that of Dickens; and the result was equally honourable. Men like these, who hold the key of the human heart, may fear little, indeed, to take their stand upon literature.

In July of this same year, (1848,) the amateur company of players, of which Dickens was manager,

played in Edinburgh, in furtherance of a scheme for the benefit of that veteran of the drama, Sheridan Knowles. Moir, be sure, was present. Writing to Dickens thereafter, on this and other topics, he says :—"Of theatricals, although a fond admirer, I do not pretend to be a great judge; but, so far as gratification and satisfaction went, I must say that I never sat to representations better sustained. To do Falstaff up to a reader's imagination, I should suppose, is utterly impossible; but Mr Lemon was anything but a failure. Even Pistol has become so much an individual picture in every man's mind, that he also is perhaps better as a 'Yarrow Unvisited.' Yet George Cruickshank did him well; although not up to his Caniphor, which was reality itself. Pardon me for saying that I never saw Slender represented before. Scarcely behind you was Costello's Dr Caius, than which it would be difficult to conceive anything better. It was past 'two o'clock in the morning' before my sides recovered from the *scena* between the two S's.—Some days after you left Scotland, I had the happiness of meeting George Cruickshank at dinner with Professor Wilson, the Sheriff, Blackwood, and Jay from America. Although I have had some pleasant letters from Cruickshank, I never had an opportunity before of taking his hand. We are very apt to form erroneous notions of the personal appearance of men who have particularly interested us, and in spite of ourselves the

mind will—must, I fancy—form an ideal portrait; but with me fancy and fact met in Cruickshank: the reality was exactly what I had expected. Could this be from the perfect truth and originality, which he has imparted to his creations, being only reflections of himself? We were friends in ten minutes; and he gave me some curious and most interesting details of his early life and progress. 'The Drunkard,' and 'The Drunkard's Children,' I had both admired and shuddered over; but I must say, in spite of this, that the only thing in him I was not prepared to meet with was—the Tee-totaller. Be he right or wrong for himself, one thing requires consideration. I have known several men of talent and genius who, under the impression that they had been accustomed to live too fully, had become water-drinkers; and it has struck me that the abstraction of the wine might also be noted in the abstraction of that vigour and originality by which their compositions were formerly distinguished. It is a curious subject, and worthy of investigation. Admitting what I have stated to be a fact, the only plausible counter-argument would be, that some breaking-down of the constitution—some threatening of mischief—was the cause why stimulants were abandoned, and not the effect of the abandonment. Wordsworth has been all along a water-drinker: is this the cause why his compositions of early and later years are so much akin to each other? Is it thus that 'the child has been father of the man?'

—You mention your enjoyment of Foster's *Goldsmith*. It is indeed a well-written and most interesting book, and gives us everything regarding Oliver that we could wish—perhaps more, sometimes; for, before reading the actual history of the man, I had so mixed up Goldsmith with the exquisite associations of 'The Vicar of Wakefield,' 'The Traveller,' and 'The Deserted Village,' that all were blent together. How such a harum-scarum should have had his mind in such subjection as to write like an angel, while he often not only talked but acted like poor Poll, must ever remain a mystery. Even Mr Foster has not sufficiently solved it. Not one oddity of his person or circumstances has Goldsmith imparted to his writings, which, for taste and purity, are equalled by nothing in the English tongue, save the poetry of Campbell and the prose of Irving.—I am delighted to learn from you that *Dombey* has been your most successful book. Be your next still more so! But when are we to hear something of it? Depend upon it, the world cannot afford to let *you* remain idle. At the very least, a Christmas volume will be expected. It will not do to say you require a breathing-time. Something the public demands, and must have. With you, as it was with Sir Walter Scott, they will never think they have had enough, so long as you can wag a pen."

Being somewhat unwell in 1849, the author of *Mansie* took a "June jaunt" into the Highlands

with Professor Wilson, Mr Henry Glassford Bell, and one or two other friends. Thus he writes to his wife from Kinloch-Rannoch :—"The Professor has just returned (seven o'clock) from a long day's fishing, and we dine at eight. He has brought home seven dozen of trouts. Mr Bell has not yet returned, so we do not know his sport : we have bets about the numbers that can be taken in one day. The Professor and myself went to the parish church yesterday, and I was quite pleased to see such a devout and respectable congregation. Among the audience were Robertson of Struan and Lord Mexborough, in kilts. The scenery about us here is rich and beautiful, and the people all so decent-looking, sober, contented, and happy. The young lads in the evening put the stone, and the little girls dance in rings, so that one is almost inclined to sigh when he thinks of the strife, envy, and bustle of the great world. It is easy to account, from what I see around me, for the intense love with which a Highlander regards his native district. We have been rowing to-day for several hours on Loch Rannoch, and certainly everything around is magnificent."

Towards the end of July, Moir writes to me thus :—"About a month ago, I was for some days in the Highlands with Professor Wilson and another friend or two. Our headquarters were at Kinloch-Rannoch, at the foot of Schehallion. The change from my gin-horse circle was most exhilarating.

The Professor was in great force, and up to the waist in water, day after day, for six or eight hours, fishing. We had also some good sailing, and many new sources for pleasant recollection were opened up to me. Before I set out, I felt worn out and unwell, without any complaint; but I had in a great measure given up eating and sleeping, without both of which no man can thrive. I am happy to say that the change has much benefited me, short although it was, and I feel again very much myself. Wilson never was finer than in his new series, (*Dies Boreales.*) He is now busy with No. III. Of course, these papers will want the piquancy which the *Noctes* possessed, in personal and political allusions; but they cannot fail to charm every one who has the least idea of high writing and fine Christian philosophy. The Thunder criticism in No. II. is exquisite, and some of the descriptions could have been written by no one else. Elizabeth begs to be kindly remembered to you. She has a fine baby, on looking at which I am reminded of my own curious position as a grandfather. I fear I must now be struck off the list of *young poets.*"

Yet how happy was he all the while, central in his double web of family ties! He had a strength round about him more than the munition of rocks!

Moir had been introduced at Mr Blackwood's to Mrs Hemans, when she was last in Edinburgh. By all the tuneful sisterhood he was looked to as a

favourite brother. Misses Corbett, (of *The Odd Volume*,) Mrs Gordon of Campbeltoune, Miss Camilla Toulmin, Miss Catherine Sinclair, Mrs Mary Howitt, Mrs S. C. Hall, Mrs Caroline Southey, and others, were among his correspondents and friends. In the end of 1849 he received a copy of a new novel, entitled, *Passages in the Life of Mrs Margaret Maitland of Sunnyside*, with a modest note, intimating that the author had been a patient of his own, when a little girl, and that his special kindness to her had dwelt so vividly in her mind, that she was now emboldened to ask his friendly attention to this, her first attempt in literature. An intimation of this kind, added to the merit of the work, could not fail to draw a letter of encouragement from Delta. "I have to render many thanks," says the accomplished author in reply, "for your very kind letter and gentle judgment of the book I troubled you with. I think young writers would not wince as they do before the veiled censors of the press, if the generous kindliness of encouragement were given to them more frequently by the masters of their craft. There is just one little matter, on which I hope you will suffer me to say a word in defence—that is, in respect to the class ministerial, and their perhaps too prominent position in these humble pages of mine. I know more of ministers than I do of any other class of men. Almost all the society in which I have found pleasure has been clerical; and

it has become natural for me to regard them, not as abstract persons at all, but rather as the intelligent, agreeable companions which, I fancy, they generally are. Besides, it seems to me that, in an artistic point of view, the class is one of the most interesting; and I think, if one may judge from their practice, Mr Galt and Professor Wilson both agree with me. The ministers of Scotland have a standing-ground of their own, so distinct, and at the same time so broad, that, as I fancy, there is a peculiar attraction about their position; and I have nowhere seen character so well developed and contrasted as in a country presbytery in the south of Scotland of which I have some knowledge. The general vigour and respectable intellectual gifts, displaying themselves in so many diverse forms, the simplicities and the good sense, the strength and the weakness, peculiar to them as a class—I think there is much interest and a considerable charm in these; and I shall be glad to be permitted, when I can catch the tone of my original, to draw one of my good friends now and then. It is no doubt a great drawback, that it is impossible to do that without bringing in the polemics of the time; but I think that now the different parties in the Church can afford in all good-humour to throw these paper pellets at each other, and may give and take without offence. I must crave your forbearance for saying so much on this subject. There is another prominent fault

in the book, which I perceive you notice; it is my want of power to paint men. But I think that this failing is common to most feminine writers, and that the shadowy angels who represent ideal womanhood, in the books of our brethren who write novels, make us the more excusable. I shall be most happy, with many thanks, to accept your kind invitation in summer. We expect all of us to be in Edinburgh in the end of May, if no unknown obstacle intervenes. I cannot fancy any greater enjoyment than the one you are so good as to promise me; and I must again try to thank you for writing to me so long and kind a letter, when your hands were so full. In this place, where literature means the *Times* and the *Economist*, we have no such happy chance as the listeners in your Philosophical Institution; but we shall be able to read, I trust, if not to hear." So ready was Moir, in his generous nature, to turn literary civilities into personal friendship.

"My lyric, 'Disenchantment,'" says Delta, in a letter to myself, in 1850, "has had the honour to be rendered into exquisite Latin verse by Dr Humphreys, forming the leading specimen in his *Lyra Latina*. Alas for poor Wordsworth! But in the flesh all die. In spirit, none has a surer immortality on earth than he. Save a paper on the Roman Antiquities of this neighbourhood, which cost me some research and labour, and which, on being read before the

Antiquaries, took me an hour and forty minutes, I have had little leisure for literature these three or four months back; and am so tired when I get my professional matters for the day through, that I am fit for nothing but a pilgrimage to the land of Nod. I am become, however, a famous dreamer, and the romance which has departed from the external world forms a gold leaf to my dreams."

Moir delighted in antiquarian studies; but the full occupation of his time otherwise left him no leisure to pursue them far. The section on the Antiquities of the Parish of Inveresk, in the new edition of *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, was supplied by him. His paper, referred to in the preceding paragraph, as read before the Antiquarian Society, was an elaborate inquiry into the evidences of Inveresk being the site of a Roman *colonia* and *oppidum*. After incidentally describing the earlier discoveries made at Inveresk and its immediate neighbourhood, including the remarkable altar found in 1565, dedicated *Apolini Granno*, which attracted the attention of Queen Elizabeth and Cecil, as well as of our Scottish Queen, and was afterwards described by Napier of Merchiston, Mr Moir proceeded to notice various recent discoveries in the same vicinity. In the course of his communication, he exhibited the contents of a Roman cinerary urn, recently dug up near the church-

yard, and also laid upon the table a very fine fragment of embossed Samian ware, found in digging a grave of unusual depth near the church, and which was now presented to the Society by its owner, Mr Ritchie, the sculptor. After citing much interesting evidence in proof of the importance of Inveresk as a Roman station and town, Mr Moir referred to the accounts of sepulchral urns, and other supposed Roman relics, found at Currie, near Borthwick Castle, and usually brought forward as proofs of Currie's correspondence with *Curia*, the first stage in the Fifth Iter of Richard of Cirencester. These, however, he showed to be, nearly all of them, not Roman, but British remains; and he then adduced sundry arguments, leading, as he thought, to the identification of the more important station and colony of Inveresk with the Roman *Curia*. An interesting discussion followed, Mr D. Laing, Mr Robert Chambers, Mr Wilson, and other members, taking part in it. The supposed Roman origin of the present old bridge at Musselburgh was specially discussed; the general opinion being that there was no evidence in its character or masonry to distinguish it from other works of the same date as that assigned to it in the Maitland MSS., namely, about 1520, when it was either rebuilt or so completely repaired, by Lady Janet Hepburn, as to obliterate every trace of Roman workmanship. It appeared, however, from evidence brought forward by Mr

Moir, that until a comparatively recent period it had only two arches, a third having been added on the east side of the Esk; and this was corroborated by a curious contemporary bird's-eye view of the Battle of Pinkie, exhibited by Mr Laing to the meeting, representing the bridge with only two arches.

In spring, 1851, Mr Moir delivered a course of Six Lectures at the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution, on the Poetical Literature of the Past Half-Century. My able friend, Dr Samuel Brown, the chemist, himself a brother lecturer at the Institution, gives me the following account of Moir's appearance in his new capacity:—"I accompanied Delta and the Directors of the Institution to the platform, on the occasion of his first lecture. His welcome by one of the largest audiences ever gathered within the hall was hearty and long drawn out, there being many present who loved the sight of a man so dear as the author of 'Casa Wappy' and other familiar strains. Then the author of *Mansie Wauch* was an object of kindly interest to hundreds who had never seen him before. He read his Lecture like a diffident person going through a manuscript work in a company of friends, without oratory, and without effect at all commensurate with the quiet eloquence of the written discourse. Yet there was a sweet and strong charm in the whole affair, the very spirit of good-humour, simplicity, and manliness. It was

the prelection of a true British poet and a British gentleman. At the same time, the identical discourse, nobly rendered by Wilson, would have told ten times as well. The passages his own manner was peculiarly suited to were those of sly humour, which he gave with real zest, chuckling over them himself as he came upon them, and carrying the crowd away with him in his little whirlpools of laughter. He concluded, as he began, somewhat abruptly. In short, he showed himself not an orator, but a poet; always remembering that, as a poet, he could not fail to display himself in the secondary character of an eloquent judge of poetry. If this distinction had been borne in mind, his Lectures would have been more satisfactory to those who demand too much of a man; and, as it was, they were highly popular with the majority."

Moir, at this time, was in a very nervous and delicate state of health; and his more intimate friends, who were aware of the fact, and accompanied him to the lecture-room, were not a little uneasy as to how he should get through his task. Their fears, however, were disappointed. He gathered strength as the course proceeded, and, along with strength, confidence and ease; and though his power of popular delivery was not what it would have been, had he been in his usual good health, still the broad result, from matter and manner taken together, was amply sufficient.

Messrs Blackwood heard the lectures delivered, and, estimating them highly, made arrangements with the author for their immediate publication. This estimate was fully borne out by the press and the public. A second edition of the volume has already been called for.

It is somewhere remarked by Humboldt, that, under the southern hemisphere by night, you are struck with this peculiarity of the heavens, that the stars are very much in clusters, and that between these clusters are vast ebon belts of starless firmament. Similar is the general aspect of the literary heavens. Great men appear in clusters; and wide and black are the intervening belts of time, starred with few or no luminaries of genius. The age of Pericles in Greece showed us one of the most glorious clusters of great men in Art and literature. So did the Roman Augustan age. So did the age of the Medici family in Italy. So did the age of Louis XIV. in France. So did the close of the last century in Germany. In our own country, multitudinous was the constellation of genius which glorified the time of Elizabeth. The opening up of the treasures of the Scriptures to the renewed heart of reformed England; the spirit-stirring examples of martyrdom, and the heroic struggles of such men as Luther, whose very words, to say nothing of his conduct, "were half-battles;" the discovery of the New World, with all its stupendous revelations, impressing Europe only the more

deeply that its greatness was not yet fully measured, and calling forth a spirit of enterprise corresponding with the boundlessness of its field; the knowledge of the wisdom of antiquity, now, for the first time, beginning to be generally disclosed to the moderns by translations from the classics; the chivalrous loyalty which the circumstances of the Virgin Queen demanded on the part of her subjects, refined especially by the dangers which, as a Protestant princess, she had undergone, and heightened by the contrasted deliverance which her reign began to secure to the new and widely-embraced faith of the nation,—such were some of the remarkable influences which stamped the stamp of originality and greatness on the Englishmen of Elizabeth's age, vigorous all of them as "giants refreshed with wine." There was Bacon, whose "knowledge," to use his own expression, indeed was "power," whose words were things—the seeds of modern wisdom—the texts of modern dissertations—the rules of modern philosophy, statesmanship, and general conduct; the myriad-minded Shakspeare; Spenser, the greatest master in ancient or modern times of the diffusive picturesque; Jonson's learned sock; the vehement tread of Marlow's buskin, hurrying by in his unhallowed lust of power; Fletcher, every flash of whom "sticks fiery off," varying in his expression from the stately dignity of "The Two Noble Kinsmen" (be not his brother Beaumont forgotten) to the lush sweetness of "The Faithful Shepherdess," mother

of "Comus," and anon crystallised off into the sharp clear angles of the Attic salt; and there was Sidney, the young in years but old in fame, "whose life was a perfect poem;" Raleigh, of fine and chivalric presence, and in his attainments "a most universal man;" and "the rest." The reign of Queen Anne has often been styled the British Augustan age, in virtue of the literature which distinguished it. The first half of the present century—now the bygone half—yields, in the power of British talent and genius, to no age of the world. The poetry of the era has been peculiarly abundant, varied, and vigorous. Over the vast field of this poetry, Moir, with his large-hearted sympathy, fine sensibilities, and sound judgment and taste, expatiates well. The general canons of criticism laid down are clear and just, and his estimates of the various poets of the age are upon the whole discriminating and fair. His exposition is often eloquent, always distinct, and always picturesque and lively. And thus has he added the reputation of a critic to his fame as a novelist and poet.

Our author's correspondence was now about to close. The following are passages from some of his last letters:—*To* GEORGE GILFILLAN, *28th April* 1851.—"Very many thanks for your *Bards of the Bible*, which I yesterday for the second time made my Sunday reading. It is your best work, and is equally extraordinary for its intellectual and its imaginative energy. Allow me to say that some-

times its contrasts and comparisons are not a little startling, and will appear most so to readers who have been accustomed only to the tame prosaic level of our theological writers. My favourite passages yesterday were the chapter on the characteristics of Hebrew Poetry, which overflows with eloquence; the passage, in that on the Poetry of Job, on the question, What is Truth? (which is worthy of Jeremy Taylor); and the remarks on Poetry and Science, where you are at first favourable, then antagonistic to my opinions. I was not aware, until after the publication of my Lectures, that Hugh Miller had some months ago devoted a paper in *The Witness* to the subject; and I doubt not, therefore, that he thinks he has a crow to pluck with me regarding it. I must still continue, however, to differ from you both, in so far as poetry prefers the indefinite to the distinct." *To the same, 13th May.*—"No one can regret more than myself the omission of the name of Sydney Yendys from my Lectures. Notices, short of course, both of *The Roman*, and Taylor's *Eve of the Conquest*, were written; but not having been embodied in the manuscript sent to press, the detached slips on which the remarks were written were accidentally omitted; nor did I discover this until the printing was over, and the thing irremediable." *To* MRS ALEXANDER, *26th May.*—"That my opinions, as expressed in the last section of my Lectures on Poetry, may not find favour in many eyes, I am

quite aware; but regarding all my tuneful brethren I have written just as I felt, and probably often erroneously. I have had very pleasant letters regarding them from Mr Macaulay, Professor Wilson, Barry Cornwall, Charles Dickens, Thomas Aird, Professor Trench, George Gilfillan, and other literary friends, and the book is taking well with the public. I trust that you continue stronger, and able to enjoy alike the beauties of nature and the delights of intellectual intercourse in your neighbourhood. We have had rather a backward spring, but now everything is in great beauty; the wheat is almost in ear, mint has been long calling out for lamb, asparagus is on the decline, and gooseberries exhibit themselves under canopies of pie-crust. I am glad to say that we are all well. Mrs M. has enjoyed better health during the two last than for many previous years. Elizabeth is now the mother of two little daughters, which make me alike rejoice and mourn in the capacity of grandpapa. Robert is one of the house-surgeons to the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, and I hope, in the course of another year, when his age permits, will be able to take the degree of M.D. The other four girls and two boys are all getting on like olive plants, and form a pleasant circle round our daily table—overflowing with affection to us, and to one another. My only dread, in looking at them, is in case of anything occurring to myself or their mother. Although my removal might more

distinctly and immediately interfere with their worldly comforts, that of the other would much more seriously, in reference to what John Knox termed 'the godly upbringing.'"

In July 1851 appeared the "Lament of Selim," Delta's last contribution to *Blackwood's Magazine*. From first to last, he contributed three hundred and seventy articles, in prose and verse, to that periodical.

From notes supplied by Mr Moir's family, we get the following closer view of his inner life:—His chief time for study was after the house was shut up for the night, and when all was quiet around him. He could then with some degree of comfort and satisfaction sit down in his library to read and write. Even then, however, from the uncertainties of his profession, he was never altogether sure of his own time. Often did he remark that, whether it was the contrariety of human nature, or his own peculiar sensitiveness to interruption at such a time, he was most liable to be broken in upon when he was most deeply engaged in writing. His professional duties were so harassing that they would have disheartened the most of men from engaging in literature; but he liked literature too well to give it up entirely, and always seemed happiest when his mind was employed in it. He was often heard to say that he required more

sleep than was generally allowed to mankind, consequently he never was an early riser. His frequent professional work during the night made him less so. Up to the year 1846, seven o'clock was his usual hour for rising. He liked breakfast immediately, and took it in his dressing-gown and slippers, when professional avocations did not require haste. He then went again to his library, and did literary work until nine. Thereafter he dressed, and was ready for the business of the day at half-past nine. From the year 1846, however, when he met with that unfortunate accident, he seldom or never rose to breakfast; his day's exertions were now so severe to him, and his nights were often so sleepless, from pain in his limb, that he required this indulgence. He breakfasted now at eight, and read his papers in bed; then rose and dressed, and came down stairs to his day's labours so fresh and cheerful that those who knew the restlessness and suffering of his nights could not but wonder to see him. The time when he had to write his Lectures on Poetry happened to be the season of the year when sickness of every kind is most common, so that, until ten or eleven o'clock at night, he seldom got pen put to paper. On going to his bed-room, sometimes at three in the morning, his mind was so engrossed with his subject that it used to be five and six o'clock before sleep would visit him. This, however, he never allowed to interfere with his breakfast hour,

and his time for rising to begin his professional duties.

While still a very young man, Mr Moir joined the communion-table, and was never afterwards a season absent from it. He never thought he had spent any one day of his life well if he had not read a portion of Scripture; and, on the Sabbath, he never read less than three chapters, either before leaving his room in the morning, or during the day. As a married man, and the head of a family, he had family worship regularly once a-day. He was most strict in his observance of the Sabbath, making a point of being at church himself at least once a-day, and causing his family and his servants to attend both services. In the afternoon, between dinner and tea, he used to take his two youngest children, one on each knee, and tell them stories from the Bible. After tea, the elder children read aloud from the Scriptures, and he explained difficulties of meaning as they occurred. Their lessons in the Catechism and Psalm-book were also carefully attended to. He was partial to some of the books of the Old Testament, especially the Psalms, and has often been observed quite overcome when any striking or affecting passage was read.

Mr Charles Moir, the poet's brother, gives us the following memoranda:—"Having occasionally staid at my brother's for a week at a time, I noticed

that he always took books with him to read in his carriage, when he had any distance to go. An hour or two in the afternoon was also, if possible, devoted to reading. By this means he left himself more time for composition in the evening. After dinner the younger children hung about his chair, their arms round his neck, and he amused them with some funny story, or puzzled them with some curious 'guess.' The youngsters were then sent away, and the conversation took a more serious turn: new books were discussed, new paintings and engravings were criticised, public affairs were touched on. He then went to his library, and there wrote, unless called out professionally, until nine o'clock. At that hour precisely, the bell rung for family worship. This he conducted, with his assembled household, in the most solemn and reverential manner. After supper, he usually took another hour or two at his desk before retiring to rest.

"David always appeared to me to be peculiarly a 'home' man. Everything about his home was dear to him. Without alluding to his great love for his wife and children, his house, his garden, nay, every tree in it, seemed to have for him an affectionate interest. The very gooseberry-bushes had each its little history. 'This one,' he would say to me, 'was planted by poor Charlie—all these smaller ones were slips taken from it; that one there was wee Willie's'—and so on—every spot

bearing some secret charm for him, every shrub and flower having its own place in the home affections: they all 'took root in love.'

"In my brother's character I often noticed one failing. When he saw anything in the conduct of any person that displeased him, or where there was on his own part a dislike, he was apt to express himself far too strongly—in a manner quite disproportioned, as I thought, to the nature of the offence. Counterbalancing this, however, was his eager and earnest desire to make immediate and ample reparation when he found that he had done the slightest injustice to any one; and he did it in such a way that he generally bound the individual more closely to him than ever.—One more trait of his character, and I have done: I mean his delight to serve others, whether by good word or deed. There was no end of his painstaking in trying to benefit a friend. Letters were written—personal application was made—no stone was left unturned, when the object was good, and the person to be helped worthy. Unreservedly did he ask for others what his sensitive nature would have shrunk from asking for himself, or for any one of his own family."

CHAPTER III.

LAST ILLNESS, AND DEATH.

We now go down toward the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

On the forenoon of Sabbath, the 22d of June 1851, Mr Moir, in dismounting from his horse at the door of a patient, accidentally hurt his weak limb, and gave himself a severe wrench in trying to save it. He suffered much pain in returning home; nevertheless, he went to church in the afternoon, it being his turn to officiate as elder at the plate. On getting back to his house, he was obliged to go to bed. On Monday, he ventured out in his carriage to see a patient at Granton. Mrs Moir went with him. On his way home he spoke of the general state of his health in a desponding manner, and said to her, "Catherine, I am resigned to the Almighty's will, whensoever it may please Him to call me. I have been trying, for some time past, to live every day as if it were to be my last." On Tuesday he was very unwell,

and complained of severe pain all along his leg. A swelling showed itself above the hip-joint. It was eased by warm fomentations, and his relatives had hope that it was simply the effect of a muscular strain. All the week he continued much in the same state, one while in bed, and another while going about his professional duties; now pretty well and cheerful, now shivering in the midst of heat, sick and faint and depressed in spirit. A piece of plate was to be presented to Mr Beveridge, minister of Inveresk, by the people of his parish and congregation, in testimony of their esteem and gratitude, and Mr Moir was named to deliver the address on making the presentation. This was a duty quite to his mind and heart, and accordingly he delivered an admirable address in the Town-hall, under the chairmanship of the Provost of Musselburgh. Finding himself no better, he set out on Tuesday the 1st of July, with Mrs Moir and their little boy, John Wilson, to try what a short release from professional cares and change of scene might do for him. They made Ayr in the afternoon. All the night following, he was feverish and restless. A short drive on Wednesday, to show Mrs Moir and his son the cottage where Burns was born, and the other objects of interest in that celebrated locality, was more than enough for him. On getting back to the inn he was seized with a violent spasm, and had nearly fallen. So much alarmed was his wife that she begged to have medical help for him; but

he refused decisively:—"No, Catherine," he said; "if a doctor were here, he would order me to bed, and I should never rise again. My constitution is making a desperate effort to relieve itself; but, lay me on a bed of sickness, and it is all over with me in this life. You must get me home to-morrow." During the night, however, he had some refreshing sleep, and next day he rose so much recruited that he made up his mind to go on to Dumfries in the afternoon. There he would spend Friday with a friend, and return home to Musselburgh on Saturday.

The scene changes to Dumfries. Towards nine o'clock on Thursday evening, Mr Moir is walking gently down by the side of the Nith, a little below the town, with his wife and son, and myself, enjoying the varied beauties of the place, in the richest light of a July sunset. "Oh me, there's that spasm again!" suddenly he exclaimed, pressing his stomach with his hand; and I saw his face collapse, as if he had been struck through with a musket-ball. We retraced our steps, but very slowly, for his suffering was great. With his usual sensitiveness about having the attention of strangers drawn to him, he would not allow a chaise to be got; but he was thankful to rest for a while on a stone seat at the head of one of the stairs in the Dock-wall. "It will soon pass off," he said, "as it did at Ayr." It did not pass off, however, and we got him back to the King's Arms Inn with great

difficulty, and put to bed. His eldest son, Mr Robert Moir, one of the house-surgeons of the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, having taken presage from a note written to him by his mother from Ayr, was now come; and Dr Blacklock was called in. They proceeded to treat the case as one of peritonitis. The symptoms became more alarming, and Dr Browne of the Crichton Institution, a personal friend of Mr Moir, was brought at midnight. He concurred with Dr Blacklock in thinking the patient in great danger, and young Moir went off to Edinburgh for Dr Christison.

I had retired during the application of leeches; but Drs Blacklock and Browne came for me. Their patient, they said, was sinking fast, and they thought it was my duty to lose no time in making Mrs Moir aware of it. In the brief absence of the medical men, Mr Moir said to his wife—"Catherine, my hours are numbered: I feel that I am not to be long with you. But do not let me distress you, or I will say no more. Look at me, my wife, and see I am perfectly resigned to the will of an All-wise Providence. Have faith: God will protect you and our children." He then calmly explained his wishes regarding his sons, and how the family were to be provided for. By this time the medical men and myself were back to the inn, and, while they took charge of their patient, I did my heavy-hearted message to his faithful wife. I was then allowed to see Mr Moir. "I am going to die," he said, as he

shook me by the hand, "but I am quite resigned—quite resigned. I have contemplated this for some time back."

In the forenoon I was again permitted to see him. He had rallied wonderfully. Mrs Moir and I sponged his arms and hands, in order to cool and soothe him. "Come," said I, "I know where the true seat of refreshment lies: bend your arm—so;" and, holding the sponge high, I rained the water with a long fall down into the hollow of his arm. He sighed with pleasure. His eye was heavy with opium; but a touch of gentle humour lighted it up, as he said to me, (with a peculiar protracted emphasis on the "Ah!" expressive of half-quizzical wonder,) "Ah! you do it on scientific principles."

Dumfries was full of mournful anxiety and inquiries when it became known, as it very soon did, that Delta was lying so ill amongst us; and the medical men were all on the alert to lend help, if necessary. Dr William Scott volunteered to relieve Dr Blacklock the following night, and administer the opiates. I asked Mr Moir if he had no objection to this. He seemed unwilling to give so much trouble; but I said to him there was not one of all his professional brethren in Dumfries but would be thankful to spring forward to his help. The tear started in his eye, and his voice faltered, as he replied,—"What am I, poor sinner, that everybody should be so kind to me!" Dr Scott's service was accepted accordingly. Dr Christison was now

come; and, after a consultation, some hope was entertained.

To the poor patient, however, the night was a restless one; and on Saturday morning he was exhausted and weak. Dr Scott of Musselburgh, his partner and son-in-law, had come during the night, stayed two or three hours with him, and gone off with Dr Christison early in the morning. His daughter, Mrs Scott, was also come; and she remained with him to the last. His younger daughters, Catherine and Anne Mary, arrived with their uncle, Mr Charles Moir, and the Rev. Mr Beveridge of Inveresk. By and by his friend, Mr John Blackwood of Edinburgh, came also. His morning and the early part of his forenoon were spent in the sacred privacies of family love, he himself praying with his wife and children, and Mrs Scott reading to him from the Bible. Mr Beveridge's visit was peculiarly acceptable. With him he joined in religious duties in serenest calmness of mind, repeatedly expressing perfect resignation to the will of God; and so composed did he continue throughout the forenoon—so peaceful, so happy—and with so much of his usual tone and look did he say at parting, "I am delighted to have seen you to-day," that his pastor went away at noon with the hope that the danger was over.

In the afternoon Mr Moir became more restless than ever, and complained of a pain on one side, so agonising that he durst not draw his breath. A

mustard blister was applied, and gave him a little relief. But a deep sinking was now visible. Mr Blackwood and I were hastily summoned. On entering his chamber, I saw that Death was there. The dying man's brother and his children were on his left, hanging about him; on his right was his wife, true to her sleepless watch of love, and he was patting her on the cheek and chin, faintly exclaiming, "My wife!" His eye was glazing fast; but he saw Mr Blackwood and myself, and beckoned us to draw near. He took me by the hand, and bade me farewell. I could only say to him, as I bent over him, "Our Blessed Lord will take care of you." He pressed my hand fervently, in token of his faith and hope. Then upon my head he laid his right hand, and gave me his blessing, his hand rising and falling at every clause of the blessing, as he pronounced it with a solemnity and fulness which I am not likely to forget. Of Mr Blackwood, he inquired after the health of one of his brothers who had been unwell, and expressed himself thankful on learning that he was better. He then gave Mr Blackwood his blessing also, and bade him farewell for time. After renewed expressions of affection to his brother and family, now putting his hand upon the heads of his children, and now upon the head of his wife, he prayed his blessing on his little ones at home, "Jeanie, and Emy, and Osy"—so he fondly styled them—and on his other brother, and all his absent friends;

and he specially begged his daughter Elizabeth to convey his blessing to her husband, who as a partner had given him the greatest satisfaction and comfort, and had proved himself a most worthy son-in-law. "And now may the Lord my God," thus he prayed aloud, naming every syllable with a long-drawn-out solemnity, "not separate between my soul and my body, till He has made a final and eternal separation between my soul and sin: for the sake of my Redeemer!" His sufferings became more and more severe. Dr Browne and Dr Blacklock, who had been to him like brothers, did everything in their power to alleviate them, administering a little chloroform internally from time to time. Most thankfully did he bless them for their kindness. He died at two o'clock on Sabbath morning, the 6th of July.

At the request of the inhabitants of Musselburgh, the funeral was a public one. A special meeting of the Town Council had been held, when it was resolved to attend in a body; and they instructed their clerk to address a letter of condolence to the bereaved family. The funeral took place on Thursday the 10th of July. It was attended by upwards of four hundred people. During the procession to the churchyard of Inveresk, the shops of the town were all shut, and the bells tolled mournfully. The procession was headed by the Provost, Magistrates, and Town Councillors of Musselburgh, and the Kirk-Session of Inveresk. In the body of

the procession, besides the immediate relatives and friends of the deceased, were the Very Rev. Principal Lee; Professors Wilson, Alison, Christison, and Aytoun; many of the clergy of Edinburgh, Musselburgh, and the country round; the Hon. Mr Coventry; Messrs Blackwood; Sheriff Gordon; Mr Robert Chambers; Mr Gordon, of the Church of Scotland's Education Committee; Mr Hugh Miller; Dr James Simson; and other eminent men of the city and neighbourhood.

And there, in the quiet churchyard of Inveresk, sleeps the dust of David Macbeth Moir, with the dust of his three little boys, whom he loved so dearly, and lamented so touchingly.

"The glory dies not, and the grief is past."

CHAPTER IV.

GENERAL CHARACTER.

DELTA was tall, well formed, and erect. The development of his head was not peculiar in any way, but good upon the whole; and he carried it with a manly elevation. His hair was light, almost inclined to be sandy; and he usually wore it short. His features were regular and handsome; but he had rather too much colour, not in the cheeks merely, but diffused over the whole face. His eyes were grey-blue, mild withal, but ready to twinkle sharp. When the sense of the ludicrous was full upon him, he had a way of raising his eyebrows, as people do in wonder; and there was a moist confused ferment in his eyes, glaring in the very riot and delirium of over-boiling fun. This was one of the strongest expressions of his nature; but, with the high moral powers ever watchful and dominant to chasten and subdue, it was not much indulged in. His usual tone of voice had a considerate kindliness in it, which was very pleasant to the ear.

In the way of beating down excuses, in order to have the visit of a friend prolonged, he was quite oldfashioned in his overbearing cordiality.

With these few remarks on Moir's personal appearance and manner, the office of his biographer, strictly speaking, ceases. His character ought to stand developed in the preceding pages. At all events, I am little disposed to sit in critical judgment, and pronounce a general verdict on any brother mortal. Still, it may be profitable for biographer and reader to take note together of some of the master features in the delineation before them.

Physic, like Law, is a jealous wife, and suffers no dalliance with the Muses. Well balanced, therefore, must that man's mind be, sound his self-regulating judgment, severe his subordinating self-denial, sleepless his industry, who can achieve medical success and literary success at one and the same time. Such a man was Macbeth Moir. He won his professional way, in spite of the common distrust of the literary character, with no advantage of birth or fortune to help him—in his native place, too, where, proverbially, a prophet has no honour. A man of conduct he must have been, in the largest sense of that term. "It is a great compliment, both to yourself," says William Howitt, in a letter to Delta in 1838, "and the people you live amongst, that literature is not made to punish you in your profession. All medical men are terribly

afraid of having a literary character, or of writing at all, except on some single professional subject. Your example proves that medical men may be devoted to their professional duties as well as distinguished in literature, and that there *may be* a public wise enough to see that." Let general society take the lesson; and let young men especially, if they find themselves ambitious of the double distinction which Delta carried off, be well aware that it is a difficult and rare one, and learn from him how to win it.

Moir's nature and life were simple, clear, and practical. Speculative and theoretical people found no favour in his eyes; the mystic and his mysticism he could not away with. A grave sense of the responsibility and the dignity of duty, a spirit of cheerful alacrity in discharging it, and principle to persevere to the end, were leading qualities of the man. All this we find in his history.

"The amiable Delta" has been a common phrase for a series of years. Let the phrase have its just meaning, and it is a good one. It were a grievous mistake, however, to suppose that Moir was a mere soft-eyed sentimentalist. The record of his life tells otherwise. In his resentment he could, at times, be even unreasonably sharp. At all times he could be angry, when it was well for him to be angry; and his anger could deepen and darken into indignation. The natural rule and measure of his spirit, however, was to be kind and brotherly, not

in temper merely, but in active service of help. In the "quarrels of authors," alike from his native disposition, and his law of self-respect, he never mixed; and throughout the wide "republic of letters" no man envied him, all men loved him. Galt and Macnish, Dickens and Hood, gave him the confidence of their hearts. Jeffrey regretted that he had not known him longer. Wilson bowed his manly head, laden with sorrow, over his closing grave. "A fine melodious nature," said Carlyle of him, when he heard of his death. "Well, he has lived and died in honour," wrote Gilfillan to me, on the same sad occasion: "Peace be to his fine and holy dust! How I regret that I never met with him! Yet it is very pleasing for me now to remember that we were on terms of good-will and friendship ere he went his eternal way." "We take farewell," says the beautiful tribute to his memory in *Blackwood's Magazine*, "of the gentlest and kindest being, of the most true and single-hearted man, that we may ever hope to meet with in the course of this earthly pilgrimage."

Professional reputation is a desirable thing, and literary honour is not to be despised; but all distinctions fade away as comparatively cheap, to those who had the privilege of knowing Mr Moir in "the mild majesty of private life." Constituted and composed of so many harmonious excellencies, the Christian gentleman, in the bosom of his beautiful family, was the consummation of them all.

CHAPTER V.

THE POETRY.

When Moir complained to me, after his severe accident in 1846, that he was a good deal depressed in spirit, I advised him, by way of gentle and pleasant recreation, to be preparing a general edition of his poetry for ultimate publication. Some months thereafter he told me that he had set about it, selecting and revising such pieces as he thought had "a chance of living" when he himself was gone. After his death, it was discovered that he had made but little progress. Probably he found a difficult task in what I had recommended as a recreation, gentle and pleasant. So hurriedly, in his snatches of leisure, had he written for the periodicals, that, besides issuing much slight imperfect matter, he had in his better poems repeated himself to a great extent. To publish the whole even of these better poems together, was out of the question—for, when a man has said a thing distinctly and well once, why say it again? and to

reject good pieces, merely because they were very like other good ones that he had written, required a degree of self-denial such as few poets are masters of.

To execute the selection and publication which Delta himself did not live to accomplish, became the natural desire of his relatives and literary friends; and, at their special request, I undertook the office. Professor Wilson had given it to me as his judgment, that the selection should be a narrow and severe one. It has been made on the following five-fold principle :—In the first place, Delta's own exquisite selection of 1843, comprising "Domestic Verses" and "Elegiac Effusions," has not been touched : it leads off our poetical publication. In the second place, all decidedly inferior matter, and all slight hasty sketches, with touches of good poetry in them, but yet not poems, properly so called, have been set aside as inadmissible. From Moir's hurried life, and that longing for present publication, overmastering a patient regard and provision for the nobler praise of futurity, which was a feature of his character, his crude pieces are far too numerous. In the third place, poems of tolerable merit, superseded, however, by after poems, finished and fine, which have obviously taken birth and shape from the inferior predecessors, have also been set aside. This, too, is a pretty numerous class. In the *Genevieve* volume, for instance, I had marked for adoption a very fair sketch, entitled

"Solitude;" but a closer revision showed me that it was the mere rudimentary literal body from which was afterwards formed Delta's highest imaginative piece, "The Deserted Churchyard." How fortunate for an author's fame, when he does not publish such first substances at all, but lets them dwell in his own mind till the literal is slowly crystallised into the ideal; and how much after-regret does he miss! Save for such critical instruction as we are here drawing from it, the poem of "Solitude" is now useless: I would no more think of publishing it in the same selection with "The Deserted Churchyard" than I would of presenting a bit of half-crystallised carbon side by side with "The Mountain of Light." Contrary to rigour, however, in this third rule of selection, I have admitted "Winter Wild," though it is obviously but the first cast of "The Snow," which is later and better: I had some hesitation about it; but both the poems are so very picturesque, that I have not pushed the principle. In the fourth place, of dozens of poems equally good, but all of precisely the same strain of sentiment, mournfully reverting to the happy days of boyhood, wailing for desolate and disconsolate love, or symbolising man's fading life by the decay of the year, all I could reasonably do was to admit two or three of the best. Scattered over the periodical publications of thirty years, such iterations might be borne with, though not worthy of a poet like

Delta; but brought into one collection, they could only tire the reader. In the fifth place, some long pieces, put together without symmetry, cumbrous and ineffective, and at all events useless without the sternest reconstruction, have been kept back.

In Delta's earlier strains there are generally fancy, and feeling, and musical rythm, but not much thought. His love of poetry, however, never suffered abatement, and, as "a maker," he was improving to the very last. To unfaded freshness of heart he was adding riper thought: such was one of the prime blessings of his pure nature and life. Reserve and patience were what he wanted in order to be a greater name in song than he is; but let us so far for this blame his profession, which gave him no hope of a continuity of time at his disposal. Had he had more leisure, instead of writing more verse, he would have written less.

With all these drawbacks, it is a great thing to present to the public such a body of poetry as the following—in extent so large, and of so high a value.

The great poets of old, of whom Homer and Virgil are worthy representatives, still keep the World of Letters right by common sense and common feeling. "Prose run mad," and Prose on all manner of stilts, and Prose masquerading under all the obscurities of mysticism, has outgone

even the most furious exaggerations of Verse in distorting eras of literature. But aye the common sense of Homer and Virgil reassert their supremacy, and the great soul of the Literary World is kept right. Thanks to Shakspeare for the same sort of general service. In all the wildest imaginative flights of his "Tempest" and "Midsummer Night's Dream," for instance, not the slightest vail of mysticism or obscurity interposes betwixt his meaning and the soul of his reader. All honour, then, to common sense, as the foundation, not only of the practical business of life, but of the most ideal poetry itself. Poetry must be more than common sense, but it must be that at least. Moir's whole structure of character, genius, and authorship, rests on this sure foundation. Good sound sense, and simple healthy feeling, excited and exalted though these may be, never fail him. He draws from nature, and from himself direct. The movement of his mind is his own; it is never mistaken for another man's. Many of his poems, too, have all the vitality of the earnest and the actual, having sprung forth from the heated *nidus* of his daily practical spirit. He wrote his bold "Shadow of a Truth," for instance, to help his other determined efforts against Catholic Emancipation. "The Fowler" is the genuine, vivid reproduction of an actual incident in his boyhood—an incident so deeply impressed upon his mind and heart, as to have

kept him all his days thereafter from taking the life of bird or beast: had he "shot the albatross," not more could he have been frightened from future cruelty. Such poems as these have a life of life as real as any of the poems of Burns.

In our author's varied verse we find descriptive power, fancy delicate and graceful, picturesqueness and imaginative grandeur, holy beauty, pensive tenderness, heart-subduing pathos.

As a sample of Moir's descriptive power, take the morning scene by the sea, in the poem of "The Fowler" just alluded to. Desolate, spectral, drear, the scene is a most impressive one.

And thus dips Delta his forefinger in dew, and, stooping down to the spangled meadow, limns us off the fresh morning in a few light touches:—

"'Twas the flush of dawn; on the dewy lawn
Shone out the purpling day;
The lark on high sang down from the sky,
The thrush from the chestnut spray;
On the lakelet blue the water-coot
Oared forth with her sable young;
While at its edge, from reed and sedge,
The fisher-hern upsprung;
In peaceful pride, by Esk's green side,
The shy deer strayed through Roslin glen;
And the hill-fox to the Roman camp
Stole up from Hawthornden."

How soft and clear this little bit of painting! Campbell's rapid sketch of the morning, in "Gertrude of Wyoming," is scarcely finer. True to

his stealthy, momentary, morning appearances, the fox is in both of them.

Here is another sweet image of the summer morning :—

> "The cushat stood amidst the topmost boughs
> Of the tall tree, his white-ringed neck aslant,
> Down through the leaves to see his brooding mate."

A common writer would have given us the cushat as *sitting* on the *top* of the tree. The poet knows better: true to nature in a minute but peculiar characteristic, his cushat "*stood*," and not on the top, but "*amidst* the topmost boughs."

Once upon a time, when I was fishing on the Tweed, between Old Melrose and Dryburgh, I saw, after a thunder-storm, a slip of dewy sunlight streaming down through a wild-rose bush, on the bank, all a-blush with roses. I thought it the sweetest sight I had ever seen in nature. Some years afterwards, I lighted on "The Eglantine," by Delta, in *Blackwood's Magazine*, and came to the following lovely lines :—

> "At length the rent battalia cleared away—
> The tempest-cloven clouds; and suddon fell
> A streak of joyful sunshine: on a bush
> Of wild-rose fell its beauty. All was dark
> Around it still, and dismal; but the beam
> (Like Hope sent down to re-illume Despair)
> Burned on the bush, displaying every leaf,
> And bud, and blossom, with such perfect light
> And exquisite splendour, that since then my heart
> Hath deemed it Nature's favourite, and mine eyes
> Fall on it never, but that thought recurs,
> And memories of the bypast, sad and sweet."

"What!" I exclaimed, "has our triangular friend really got hold of my rose-bush?" So fine-eyed was Delta to all the physiognomics of Mother Earth and the Seasons.

And young of heart was he to the last. The best of his "Poems on Flowers," that charming parterre in the Garden of Poesy here laid out to the public, were his latest productions. Graceful and beautiful exceedingly, "The Birth of the Flowers" is one of Delta's masterpieces. The Genius of the Air is thus delicately touched off:—

"Eye could not gaze on shape so bright,
Which from its atmosphere of light,
And love, and beauty, shed around,
From every winnow of her wings,
Upon the fainting air perfumes
Sweeter than Thought's imaginings;
And at each silent bend of grace,
The Dreamer's raptured eye could trace
(Far richer than the peacock's plumes)
A rainbow shadow on the ground,
As if from out Elysium's bowers,
From brightest gold to deepest blue,
Blossoms of every form and hue
Had fallen to earth in radiant showers.
Vainly would human words convey
Spiritual music, or portray
Seraphic loveliness—the grace
Flowing like glory from that face,—
Which, as 'twas said of Una's, made,
Where'er the sinless virgin strayed,
A sunshine in the shady place.
The snowdrop was her brow; the rose
Her cheek; her clear, full, gentle eye
The violet, in its deepest dye;
The lily of the Nile her nose;
Before the crimson of her lips
Carnations waned in dim eclipse;

And downward o'er her shoulders, white
As Sharon's rose in fullest blow,
Her floating tresses took delight
To curl in hyacinthine flow.
Her vesture seemed as from the blooms
Of all the circling seasons wove,
With magic warp, in fairy looms,
And tissued with the woof of love."

The birth of the universal Daisy might touch the ghost of Chaucer with delight :—

"First heavenward, with refulgent smile,
She glanced, then earthward turned; the while
From out her lap she scattered round
Its riches of all scents and hues—
Scarlets and saffrons, pinks and blues,
And sowed with living gems the ground.
The rose to eastern plains she gave;
The lily to the western wave;
The violet to the south; and forth
The thistle to the hardy north.
Then, in triumphant ecstasy,
Glancing across wide earth her eye,
She flung abroad her arms in air,
And daisies sprung up everywhere!"

But we have another full tribute to the Daisy in this rich field-plot of fancy ground. Honour to the "Gold-headed Cane:" two of the finest poems on the Daisy, since Chaucer's many exquisite touches of affection for the flower, are by Dr Mason Good and Dr Moir of Musselburgh.

And now for picturesqueness :—In its combination of the literal graphic and the graphic imaginative, "The Old Seaport" is a first-rate piece. The dim old port itself, with its sombre sea and sky, is a bit of daguerreotype—desolate, dusty, grey. Imagina-

tion, by simple natural links of association, glances over far seas and into foreign lands. And then we are recalled to the old seaport, and the piece is closed—round and complete. What an immense power Poetry has beyond Painting in such matters! Hosts of artists could do us the old town itself admirably on canvass; but our poet's imaginative bringing-in of foreign scenes and perils, by rapid touches, lies beyond the faculty of the brush.

In the "Stanzas for the Burns Festival" we have burly picturesque power, intertissued with generous appreciation, and all the moral softnesses of charity and love. It is one of Delta's best pieces.

"The Deserted Churchyard" has already been specially named. In its ideal abstractions and solemn imagery it is worthy of Collins.

In all the poetry of true love there is nothing more affectionately tender than "Mine Own." The very soul of voluptuous tenderness breathes through "The Song of the South." What cheerful tenderness in "The Highlander's Return!" What homely touching tenderness in the "Rustic Lad's Lament in the Town!" What downcast pensive tenderness, what holy beauty, in "The Contadina"—who might have been the mother of our Saviour!

And now for the rarest of all poetic merit—heart-subduing pathos. The "Domestic Verses" themselves are a complete "Worship of Sorrow." The simple, sobbing, wailing pathos of "Casa

Wappy" has drawn more tears of mothers than any other dirge of our day. Poem we are loth to call it: such things are not made by the brain: they are the spilth of the human heart—that wonderful fountain, fed from the living veins of Heaven, and welling over. Danaë and her babe in the little ark, on the midnight waste of waters, and all the other "scrolls" of "the tender-hearted, pure Simonides," yield and do obeisance to "Casa Wappy." Tears are the truest of critics. What need of farther exposition? Justly did the late Lord Jeffrey, writing to Moir, say of the "Domestic Verses"—"I cannot resist the impulse of thanking you, with all my heart, for the deep gratification you have afforded me, and the soothing, and, I hope, *bettering* emotions which you have excited. I am sure that what you have written is more genuine pathos than anything almost I have ever read in verse, and is so tender and true, so sweet and natural, as to make all lower recommendations indifferent."

In the great company of our Scottish Masters of Song — Dunbar, Douglas, Lindsay, Buchanan, Drummond, Thomson, Ramsay, Fergusson, Armstrong, Beattie, Home, Blair, Burns, Scott, Leyden, Grahame, Campbell, Wilson, Hogg, Cunningham, Pollok, Motherwell, Tennant, and the rest—Moir now takes his honoured place.

"For this man bears an everlasting name."

DOMESTIC VERSES.

In the Churchyard at Inveresk there is a simple Tombstone, to which all the following little Poems, save the first and the Sonnets, bear reference. It is inscribed as follows:—

CHARLES BELL M.
Died 17th February 1838, aged four and a half years.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD M.
Died 28th February 1838, aged fifteen months.

DAVID MACBETH M.
Died 23d August 1839, aged four years and four months.

Of such is the kingdom of heaven.—*Mat.* xix. 14.

SONNETS

ON THE SCENERY OF THE TWEED;

INSCRIBED TO C. E. M.

As we had been in heart, now link'd in hand,
Green Learmonth and the Cheviots left behind,
Homeward 'twas ours by pastoral Tweed to wind,
Through the Arcadia of the Border-land:
Vainly would words portray my feelings, when
(A dreary chasm of separation past)
Fate gave thee to my vacant arms at last,
And made me the most happy man of men.
Accept these trifles, lovely and beloved,
And haply, in the days of future years,
While the far past to memory reappears,
Thou may'st retrace these tablets, not unmoved,
Catherine! whose holy constancy was proved
By all that deepest tries, and most endears.

June 1829.

I.

WARK CASTLE.

EMBLEM of strength, which time hath quite subdued,
Scarcely on thy green mount the eye may trace
Those girding walls which made thee once a place
Of succour, in old days of deadly feud.
Yes! thou wert once the Scotch marauder's dread;
And vainly did the Roxburgh shafts assail
Thy moated towers, from which they fell like hail;
While waved Northumbria's pennon o'er thy head.[1]
Thou wert the work of man, and so hast pass'd
Like those who piled thee; but the features still
Of steadfast Nature all unchanged remain;
Still Cheviot listens to the northern blast,
And the blue Tweed winds murmuring round thy hill;
While Carham whispers of the slaughter'd Dane.[2]

II.

DRYBURGH ABBEY.

BENEATH, Tweed murmur'd 'mid the forests green:
And through thy beech-tree and laburnum boughs,
A solemn ruin, lovely in repose,
Dryburgh! thine ivy'd walls were greyly seen:
Thy court is now a garden, where the flowers
Expand in silent beauty, and the bird,
Flitting from arch to arch, alone is heard
To cheer with song the melancholy bowers.
Yet did a solemn pleasure fill the soul,
As through thy shadowy cloistral cells we trode,
To think, hoar pile! that once thou wert the abode
Of men, who could to solitude control
Their hopes—yea! from Ambition's pathways stole,
To give their whole lives blamelessly to God![3]

III.

MELROSE ABBEY.

SUMMER was on thee—the meridian light,
And, as we wander'd through thy column'd aisles,
Deck'd all thy hoar magnificence with smiles,
Making the rugged soft, the gloomy bright.
Nor was reflection from us far apart,
As clomb our steps thy lone and lofty stair,
Till, gain'd the summit, tick'd in silent air
Thine ancient clock, as 'twere thy throbbing heart.
Monastic grandeur and baronial pride
Subdued—the former half, the latter quite,
Pile of king David! to thine altar's site,
Full many a footstep guides, and long shall guide;
Where they repose, who met not, save in fight—
And Douglas sleeps with Evers, side by side![4]

IV.

ABBOTSFORD.

The calm of evening o'er the dark pine-wood
Lay with an aureate glow, as we explored
Thy classic precincts, hallow'd Abbotsford!
And at thy porch in admiration stood:
We felt thou wert the work, th' abode of Him
Whose fame hath shed a lustre on our age,
The mightiest of the mighty!—o'er whose page
Thousands shall hang, until Time's eye grow dim;
And then we thought, when shall have pass'd away
The millions now pursuing life's career,
And Scott himself is dust, how, lingering here,
Pilgrims from all the lands of earth shall stray
Amid thy cherish'd ruins, and survey
The scenes around, with reverential fear![5]

V.

NIDPATH CASTLE.

STERN, rugged pile! thy scowl recalls the days
Of foray and of feud, when, long ago,
Homes were thought worthy of reproach or praise
Only as yielding safeguards from the foe:
Over thy gateways the armorial arms
Proclaim of doughty Douglases, who held
Thy towers against the foe, and thence repell'd
Oft, after efforts vain, invasion's harms.
Eve dimm'd the hills, as, by the Tweed below,
We sat where once thy blossomy orchards smiled,
And yet where many an apple-tree grows wild,
Listening the blackbird, and the river's flow;
While, high between us and the sunset glow,
Thy giant walls seem'd picturesquely piled.[6]

VI.

"THE BUSH ABOON TRAQUAIR."

As speaks the sea-shell from the window-sill
Of cottage-home, far inland, to the soul
Of the bronzed veteran, till he hears the roll
Of ocean 'mid its islands chafing still;
As speaks the love-gift to the lonely heart
Of her, whose hopes are buried in the grave
Of him, whom tears, prayer, passion could not save,
And Fate but link'd, that Death might tear apart,—
So speaks the ancient melody of thee,
Green "Bush aboon Traquair," that from the steep
O'erhang'st the Tweed—until, mayhap afar,
In realms beyond the separating sea,
The plaided Exile, 'neath the Evening Star,
Thinking of Scotland, scarce forbears to weep![7]

TO

MY INFANT DAUGHTER, E. C. M.

I.

THERE is no sound upon the night,
As by the shaded lamp I trace,
My babe, in smiling beauty bright,
The changes of thy sleeping face.

II.

Hallow'd to us shall be the hour,
Yea, sacred through all time to come,
Which gave us thee, a living flower,
To bless and beautify our home.

III.

Thy presence is a charm, which wakes
A new creation to my sight;
Gives life another hue, and makes
The wither'd green, the faded bright.

IV.

Pure as a lily of the brook,
Heaven's signet on thy forehead lies,
And Heaven is read in every look,
My Daughter, of thy soft blue eyes!

V.

In sleep thy gentle spirit seems
To some bright realm to wander back;
And seraphs, mingling with thy dreams,
Allure thee to their shining track.

VI.

Already, like a vernal flower,
I see thee opening to the light,
And day by day, and hour by hour,
Becoming more divinely bright.

VII.

Yet in my gladness stirs a sigh,
Even for the blessing of thy birth,
Knowing how sins and sorrows try
Mankind, and darken o'er the earth.

VIII.

Ah! little dost thou ween, my child,
The dangers of the way before;
How rocks in every path are piled,
Which few, unharm'd, can clamber o'er.

IX.

Sweet bud of beauty ! how wilt thou
Endure the bitter tempest's strife ?
Shall thy blue eyes be dimm'd, thy brow
Indented by the cares of life ?

X.

If years are destined thine, alas!
It may be—ah ! it must be so :
For all that live and breathe, the glass
Which must be quaff'd, is drugg'd with woe.

XI.

Yet, could a Father's prayers avail,
So calm thy skies of life should be,
That thou should'st glide beneath the sail
Of virtue, on a stormless sea :

XII.

And ever on thy thoughts, my child,
This sacred truth should be impress'd—
Grief clouds the soul to sin beguil'd ;
Who liveth best, God loveth best :

XIII.

Across thy path Religion's star
Should ever shed its healing ray,
To lead thee from this world's vain jar,
To scenes of peace and purer day.

XIV.

Shun Vice—the breath of her abode
Is poison'd, though with roses strewn—
And cling to Virtue; though the road
Be thorny, boldly travel on.

XV.

Yes; travel on—nor turn thee round,
Though dark the way and deep the shade;
Till on that shore thy feet be found,
Where bloom the palms that never fade.

XVI.

For thee I ask not riches—thou
Wert wealthy with a spotless name;
I ask not beauty—for thy brow
Is fair as Fancy's wish could claim.

XVII.

Be thine a spirit loathing guilt,
To duty wed, from malice free;
Be like thy Mother—and thou wilt
Be all my soul desires to see!

May 1830.

CASA WAPPY.*

I.

And hast thou sought thy heavenly home,
Our fond, dear boy—
The realms where sorrow dare not come,
Where life is joy?
Pure at thy death, as at thy birth,
Thy spirit caught no taint from earth,
Even by its bliss we mete our dearth,
Casa Wappy!

II.

Despair was in our last farewell,
As closed thine eye;
Tears of our anguish may not tell,
When thou didst die;
Words may not paint our grief for thee,
Sighs are but bubbles on the sea
Of our unfathom'd agony,
Casa Wappy!

* The self-appellative of a beloved child.

III.

Thou wert a vision of delight
To bless us given;
Beauty embodied to our sight—
A type of Heaven:
So dear to us thou wert, thou art
Even less thine own self, than a part
Of mine, and of thy Mother's heart,
Casa Wappy!

IV.

Thy bright, brief day knew no decline—
'Twas cloudless joy;
Sunrise and night alone were thine,
Beloved boy!
This morn beheld thee blithe and gay;
That found thee prostrate in decay;
And, ere a third shone, clay was clay,
Casa Wappy!

V.

Gem of our hearth, our household pride,
Earth's undefiled,
Could love have saved, thou hadst not died,
Our dear, sweet child!
Humbly we bow to Fate's decree;
Yet had we hoped that Time should see
Thee mourn for us, not us for thee,
Casa Wappy!

VI.

Do what I may, go where I will,
Thou meet'st my sight;
There dost thou glide before me still—
A form of light!
I feel thy breath upon my cheek,
I see thee smile, I hear thee speak,
Till oh! my heart is like to break,
Casa Wappy!

VII.

Methinks, thou smil'st before me now,
With glance of stealth;
The hair thrown back from thy full brow
In buoyant health:
I see thine eyes' deep violet light,
Thy dimpled cheek carnation'd bright,
Thy clasping arms so round and white,
Casa Wappy!

VIII.

The nursery shows thy pictured wall,
Thy bat, thy bow,
Thy cloak and bonnet, club and ball;
But where art thou?
A corner holds thine empty chair;
Thy playthings idly scatter'd there,
But speak to us of our despair,
Casa Wappy!

IX.

Even to the last, thy every word—
To glad—to grieve—
Was sweet, as sweetest song of bird
On summer's eve;
In outward beauty undecay'd,
Death o'er thy spirit cast no shade,
And, like the rainbow, thou didst fade,
Casa Wappy!

X.

We mourn for thee, when blind blank night
The chamber fills;
We pine for thee, when morn's first light
Reddens the hills;
The sun, the moon, the stars, the sea,
All—to the wall-flower and wild-pea—
Are changed: we saw the world thro' thee,
Casa Wappy!

XI.

And though, perchance, a smile may gleam
Of casual mirth,
It doth not own, whate'er may seem,
An inward birth:
We miss thy small step on the stair;
We miss thee at thine evening prayer;
All day we miss thee—every where—
Casa Wappy!

XII.

Snows muffled earth when thou didst go,
In life's spring-bloom,
Down to the appointed house below—
The silent tomb.
But now the green leaves of the tree,
The cuckoo, and "the busy bee,"
Return; but with them bring not thee,
Casa Wappy!

XIII.

'Tis so; but can it be—(while flowers
Revive again)—
Man's doom, in death that we and ours
For aye remain?
Oh! can it be, that, o'er the grave,
The grass renew'd should yearly wave,
Yet God forget our child to save?—
Casa Wappy!

XIV.

It cannot be; for were it so
Thus man could die,
Life were a mockery—Thought were woe—
And Truth a lie—
Heaven were a coinage of the brain—
Religion frenzy—Virtue vain—
And all our hopes to meet again,
Casa Wappy!

XV.

Then be to us, O dear, lost child !
With beam of love,
A star, death's uncongenial wild
Smiling above !
Soon, soon, thy little feet have trode
The skyward path, the seraph's road,
That led thee back from man to God,
Casa Wappy !

XVI.

Yet, 'tis sweet balm to our despair,
Fond, fairest boy,
That Heaven is God's, and thou art there,
With Him in joy !
There past are death and all its woes,
There beauty's stream for ever flows,
And pleasure's day no sunset knows,
Casa Wappy !

XVII.

Farewell, then—for a while, farewell—
Pride of my heart !
It cannot be that long we dwell,
Thus torn apart :
Time's shadows like the shuttle flee ;
And, dark howe'er life's night may be,
Beyond the grave I'll meet with thee,
Casa Wappy !

March 1838.

WEE WILLIE.

I.

FARE-THEE-WELL, our last and fairest,
Dear wee Willie, fare-thee-well!
God, who lent thee, hath recall'd thee
Back, with Him and His to dwell:
Fifteen moons their silver lustre
Only o'er thy brow had shed,
When thy spirit join'd the seraphs,
And thy dust the dead.

II.

Like a sunbeam, thro' our dwelling
Shone thy presence, bright and calm;
Thou didst add a zest to pleasure,
To our sorrows thou wert balm;—
Brighter beam'd thine eyes than summer;
And thy first attempt at speech
Thrill'd our heartstrings with a rapture
Music ne'er could reach.

III.

As we gazed upon thee sleeping,
With thy fine fair locks outspread,
Thou didst seem a little angel,
Who to earth from Heaven had stray'd;
And, entranced, we watch'd the vision,
Half in hope, and half affright,
Lest what we deem'd ours, and earthly,
Should dissolve in light.

IV.

Snows o'ermantled hill and valley,
Sullen clouds begrimed the sky,
When the first drear doubt oppress'd us,
That our child was doom'd to die.
Through each long night-watch, the taper
Show'd the hectic of his cheek;
And each anxious dawn beheld him
More worn out and weak.

V.

Oh, the doubts, the fears, the anguish
Of a parent's brooding heart,
When despair is hovering round it,
And yet hope will scarce depart—
When each transient flush of fever
Omens health's returning light,
Only to involve the watchers
'Mid intenser night!

VI.

'Twas even then Destruction's angel
Shook his pinions o'er our path,
Seized the rosiest of our household,
And struck Charlie down in death!
Fearful, awful! Desolation
On our lintel set his sign;
And we turn'd from his quick death-scene,
Willie, round to thine!

VII.

Like the shot-star in blue midnight,
Like the rainbow, ray by ray,
Thou wert waning as we watch'd thee,
Loveliest, in thy last decay!
As a zephyr, so serenely
Came and went thy last, low breath,
That we paused, and ask'd our spirits—
Is it so? Can this be death?

VIII.

As the beams of Spring's first morning
Through the silent chamber play'd,
Lifeless, in my arms I raised thee,
And in thy small coffin laid;
Ere the day-star with the darkness
Nine times had triumphant striven,
In one grave had met your ashes,
And your souls in Heaven!

IX.

Five were ye, the beauteous blossoms
Of our hopes, our hearts, our hearth;
Two asleep lie buried under—
Three for us yet gladden earth.
Thee, our hyacinth, gay Charlie—
Willie, thee our snow-drop pure—
Back to us shall second spring-time
Never more allure!

X.

Yet while thinking, oh! our lost ones,
Of how dear ye were to us,
Why should dreams of doubt and darkness
Haunt our troubled spirits thus?
Why across the cold dim churchyard
Flit our visions of despair?
Seated on the tomb, Faith's angel
Says, "Ye are not there!"

XI.

Where, then, are ye? With the Saviour
Blest, for ever blest, are ye,
'Mid the sinless, little children,
Who have heard his "Come to me!"
'Yond the shades of death's dark valley
Now ye lean upon his breast,
Where the wicked dare not enter,
And the weary rest.

XII.

We are wicked—we are weary—
For us pray and for us plead;
God, who ever hears the sinless,
May through you the sinful heed:
Pray that, through the Mediator,
All our faults may be forgiven;
Plead that ye be sent to greet us
At the gates of Heaven!

March 1838.

CASA'S DIRGE.

I.

VAINLY for us the sunbeams shine,
Dimm'd is our joyous hearth;
O Casa, dearer dust than thine
Ne'er mixed with mother earth!
Thou wert the corner-stone of love,
The keystone of our fate;
Thou art not! Heaven scowls dark above,
And earth is desolate!

II.

Ocean may rave with billows curl'd,
And moons may wax and wane,
And fresh flowers blossom ; but this world
Shall claim not thee again.
Closed are the eyes which bade rejoice
Our hearts till love ran o'er ;
Thy smile is vanish'd, and thy voice
Silent for evermore !

III.

Yes ; thou art gone—our hearth's delight,
Our boy so fond and dear ;
No more thy smiles to glad our sight,
No more thy songs to cheer ;
No more thy presence, like the sun,
To fill our home with joy :
Like lightning hath thy race been run,
As bright as swift, fair boy.

IV.

Now winter, with its snow departs,
The green leaves clothe the tree ;
But summer smiles not on the hearts
That bleed and break for thee :
The young May weaves her flowery crown,
Her boughs in beauty wave ;
They only shake their blossoms down
Upon thy silent grave.

V.

Dear to our souls is every spot
Where thy small feet have trod;
There odours, breathed from Eden, float,
And sainted is the sod;
The wild-bee with its buglet fine,
The blackbird singing free,
Melt both thy Mother's heart and mine—
They speak to us of thee!

VI.

Only in dreams thou comest now
From Heaven's immortal shore,
A glory round that infant brow,
Which Death's pale signet bore:
'Twas thy fond looks, 'twas thy fond lips,
That lent our joys their tone;
And life is shaded with eclipse,
Since thou from earth art gone.

VII.

Thine were the fond, endearing ways,
That tenderest feeling prove;
A thousand wiles to win our praise,
To claim and keep our love;
Fondness for us thrill'd all thy veins;
And, Casa, can it be
That nought of all the past remains
Except vain tears for thee?

VIII.

Idly we watch thy form to trace
In children on the street;
Vainly, in each familiar place,
We list thy pattering feet;
Then, sudden, o'er these fancies crush'd,
Despair's black pinions wave;
We know that sound for ever hush'd—
We look upon thy grave.

IX.

O heavenly child of mortal birth!
Our thoughts of thee arise,
Not as a denizen of earth,
But inmate of the skies:
To feel that life renew'd is thine,
A soothing balm imparts;
We quaff from out Faith's cup divine,
And Sabbath fills our hearts.

X.

Thou leanest where the fadeless wands
Of amaranth bend o'er;
Thy white wings brush the golden sands
Of Heaven's refulgent shore.
Thy home is where the psalm and song
Of angels choir abroad;
And blessed spirits, all day long,
Bask round the throne of God.

XI.

There chance and change are not; the soul
  Quaffs bliss as from a sea,
And years, through endless ages, roll,
  From sin and sorrow free:
There gush for aye fresh founts of joy,
  New raptures to impart;
Oh! dare we call thee still *our* boy,
  Who now a seraph art?

XII.

A little while—a little while—
  Ah! long it cannot be!
And thou again on us wilt smile,
  Where angels smile on thee.
How selfish is the worldly heart—
  How sinful to deplore!
Oh! that we were where now thou art,
  Not lost, but gone before.[8]

April 1838.

ELEGIAC STANZAS.

TO THE MEMORY OF D. M. M.

I.

BRIGHTLY the sun illumes the skies,
But Nature's charms no bliss impart;
A cloud seems spread before the eyes,
Whose wintry shadow chills the heart:
Oh! eyes that, for my children's sake,
Have poured forth tears like summer rain!
Oh! breaking heart, that will not break,
Yet never can be whole again!

II.

Two years agone, and where shone hearth
So fraught with buoyant mirth as ours?
Five fairies knit our thoughts to earth
With bands like steel, tho' wreath'd of flowers:
How wildly warm, how softly sweet,
The spells that bade our hearts rejoice;
While echo'd round us pattering feet,
And voices—that seem'd Joy's own voice!

III.

Then light and life illumed each eye,
And rapture beam'd from each young brow,
And eager forms were flitting by,
That would not—could not rest; but now—
The light is quench'd, the life is fled;
Where are the feet that bounded free?
Thrice have we wept the early dead,
And one small grave-turf covers three!

IV.

The spell is broken! never more
Can mortal life again seem gay;
No future ever can restore
The perish'd and the past away!
Though many a blessing gilds our lot,
Though bright eyes still our hearth illume;
Yet, O dear lost ones! ye are not,
And half the heart is in your tomb!

V.

Sudden it fell, the fatal shaft,
That struck blithe Charlie down in death;
And, while Grief's bitterest cup we quaff'd,
We turned to watch wee Willie's breath,
That faintly ebb'd, and ebb'd away,
Till all was still; and, ere the sun
A tenth time shed his parting ray,
Their bed of dreamless rest was one!

VI.

And next, dear David, thou art gone!
Beloved boy, and can it be,
That now to us remains alone
Our unavailing grief for thee?
Yet, when we trace thine upward track
To where immortal spirits reign,
We do not, dare not, wish thee back—
Back to this world of care again!

VII.

Summer was on the hills; the trees
Were bending down with golden fruit;
The bushes seem'd alive with bees,
And birds whose songs were never mute;
But 'twas even then, dear boy, when flowers,
O'ermantling earth, made all things gay,
That winter of the heart was ours,
And thine the hues of pale decay!

VIII.

Yes! David, but two moons agone,
And who so full of life as thou?
An infant Samson, vigour shone
In thy knit frame and fearless brow.
Oh! how our inmost souls it stirr'd,
To listen to thine alter'd tongue,
And see thee moping like a bird,
Whose strength was like the lion's young.

IX.

Yet so it was;—and, day by day,
Unquench'd thy thirst for sun and air,
Down the smooth walks, with blossoms gay,
We wheel'd thee in thy garden-chair;
And as we mark'd thy languid eye,
Wistful, the beds of bloom survey,
We dared not think thou wert to die,
Even in a briefer space than they.

X.

Now gleams the west, a silver sea
Besprent with clouds of wavy gold;
Earth looks like Eden; can it be
That all thy days and nights are told?
Is there no voice, whose potent sway,
Can pierce through Death's Cimmerian gloom,
Can bid the dead awake, and say—
"Arise! 'tis morning in the tomb?"

XI.

Yes! such there is; and thou that voice
Hast heard—hast heard it, and obey'd;
And we should mourn not, but rejoice
That Heaven is now thy dwelling made—
That thou hast join'd thy brothers lost—
That thou hast reach'd a happy shore,
Where peace awaits the tempest-tost,
And stormy billows rage no more.

XII.

Three blessed beings! ye are now
Where pangs and partings are unknown,
Where glory girds each sainted brow,
And golden harps surround the throne:
Oh! to have hail'd that blissful sight,
Unto the angels only given,
When thy two brothers, robed in light,
Embraced thee at the gates of Heaven!

XIII.

David, farewell! our mourning thus
We know 'tis vain; it may not be
That thou can'st come again to us,
But we, dear child, will go to thee:[9]
Then let our thoughts ascend on high,
To Him whose arm is strong to save;
Hope gives to Faith the victory,
And glory dawns beyond the grave!

September 1839.

THE LOST LAMB.

A SHEPHERD laid upon his bed,
With many a sigh, his aching head,
For him—his favourite boy—to whom
Death had been dealt—a sudden doom.
"But yesterday," with sobs he cried,
"Thou wert, with sweet looks, at my side
Life's loveliest blossom, and to-day,
Woe's me! thou liest a thing of clay!
It cannot be that thou art gone;
It cannot be that now, alone,
A greyhaired man on earth am I,
Whilst thou within its bosom lie?
Methinks I see thee smiling there,
With beaming eyes, and sunny hair,
As thou wert wont, when fondling me,
To clasp my neck from off my knee!
Was it thy voice? Again, oh speak,
My son, or else my heart will break!"

Each adding to that father's woes,
A thousand bygone scenes arose;

At home—a-field—each with its joy,
Each with its smile—and all his boy!
Now swelled his proud rebellious breast,
With darkness and with doubt opprest,
Now sank despondent, while amain
Unnerving tears fell down like rain:
Air—air—he breathed, yet wanted breath—
It was not life—it was not death—
But the drear agony between,
Where all is heard, and felt, and seen—
The wheels of action set ajar;
The body with the soul at war.
'Twas vain—'twas vain; he could not find
A haven for his shipwreck'd mind;
Sleep shunn'd his pillow. Forth he went—
The moon from midnight's azure tent
Shone down, and, with serenest light,
Flooded the windless plains of night;
The lake in its clear mirror showed
Each little star that twinkling glowed;
Aspens, that quiver with a breath,
Were stirless in that hush of death;
The birds were nestled in their bowers;
The dewdrops glittered on the flowers:
Almost it seemed as pitying Heaven
A while its sinless calm had given
To lower regions, lest despair
Should make abode for ever there;
So softly pure, so calmly bright,
Brooded o'er earth the wings of night.

O'ershadowed by its ancient yew,
His sheep-cote met the shepherd's view;
And, placid, in that calm profound,
His silent flocks lay slumbering round:
With flowing mantle by his side,
Sudden, a stranger he espied;
Bland was his visage, and his voice
Soften'd the heart, yet bade rejoice.—
"Why is thy mourning thus?" he said,
"Why thus doth sorrow bow thy head?
Why faltereth thus thy faith, that so
Abroad despairing thou dost go?
As if the God, who gave thee breath,
Held not the keys of life and death!—
When from the flocks that feed about,
A single lamb thou choosest out,
Is it not that which seemeth best
That thou dost take, yet leave the rest?—
Yes! such thy wont; and, even so,
With his choice little ones below
Doth the Good Shepherd deal; he breaks
Their earthly bands, and homeward takes,
Early, ere sin hath render'd dim
The image of the seraphim!"

Heart-struck, the shepherd home return'd;
Again within his bosom burn'd
The light of faith; and, from that day,
He trode serene life's onward way.[10]

TO

THE BUST OF MY SON CHARLES.

——— Tender was the time,
When we two parted, ne'er to meet again!
HOME.

I.

Fair image of our sainted boy,
Whose beauty calmly shows,
Blent with life's sunny smiles of joy,
Death's most serene repose—
I gaze upon thee, overcast
With sweet, sad memories of the past;
Visions which owed to thee their birth,
And, for a while, made Heaven of earth,
Return again in hues of light,
To melt my heart, yet mock my sight,
And sink amid the rayless gloom,
Which shadows thy untimely tomb.
Our fair, fond boy! and can it be,
That this pale mould of clay
Is all that now remains of thee,
So loving, loved, and gay?

II.

The past awakens—thou art there
  Before me, even now—
The silken locks of sunny hair,
  Thrown backward from thy brow—
Thy full white brow of sinless thought;
Thy cheeks by smiles to dimples wrought;
Thy radiant eyes, to which were given
The blue of autumn's midnight heaven;
Thy rose-bud mouth, whose voice's tone
Made every household heart thine own,
Our fondling child, our winning boy,
Whose thoughts, words, looks, were all of joy—
Yes! there thou art, from death come back;
  And vainly we deplore,
That earth had once a flowery track,
  Which ne'er shall blossom more!

III.

A fresh life renovates dull earth,
  Now spring renews the world;
The little birds in joy sing forth,
  'Mid leaflets half uncurl'd;—
But, Charlie, where art thou? We see
The snowdrops fade, uncull'd by thee;
We hear no more thy feet—thy voice—
Sweet sounds that made our hearts rejoice;
And every dear, familiar spot
Says—here thou wert, who now art not;

Thy beauty is a blossom crush'd ;
Thy being is a fountain hush'd ;
We look—we long for thee in vain—
The dearest soonest die !
And bankrupt Age but finds the brain
In all its sluices dry.

IV.

Methinks the afternoons come back,
When, perch'd upon my knee,
Renew'd in heart, I roam'd the track
Of fairy-land with thee ;
Or told of Joseph, when, within
The sack of little Benjamin,
The cup was found, and how he strove
In vain to smother filial love ;
Or Joshua and his mail-clad men ;
Or Daniel in the lions' den ;
Or Jonah whelm'd beneath the sea ;
Or Absalom, when to the tree
Fix'd by his tresses floating wild,
Until by Joab slain !
While David mourn'd his rebel child
The more—because in vain !

V.

And sweet it was, on summer days,
To saunter through the park,
Amid the frisking lambs at graze,
And listen to the lark ;

While thou wouldst run before, behind,
Blue-bell and butter-cup to find;
A gaysome elf, whose heart had ne'er
Been tamed by grief, or scathed by fear:
I see thy flush'd and open brow;
I hear thy soft voice, even now;
And scent the wild-flowers bright and bland,
Compress'd within thy warm white hand.
Still bloom the daisies there; the bee
Booms round each fragrant spot;
The small birds sing from bush and tree;
And only thou art not!

VI.

Thy voice was like a summer brook,
For ever singing on;
And every thing around thee took
From happiness its tone:
We think of thee, and of the blue
Bright heaven, with sunshine streaming thro';
Of blossom'd groves; of oceans calm;
Of zephyrs breathing nought but balm;
Thy life was bliss—and can it be,
That only now remains for thee
The grave's blank horror, the despair
Of silence, that endureth there?
And is this love which shall decay
Only with being's breath,
But wasted on a thing of clay,
That sleeps in endless death?

VII.

No, Charlie, thus it cannot be :—
And, gazing on thy bust,
I would not stop to dream of thee,
As perishable dust ;
Open'd for thee the golden doors
Of Heaven, thy feet are on its floors,
With jasper, beryl, and gems inlaid,
To which our sunshine is like shade ;
And all we dream of bright and fair
For evermore are with thee there ;
A halo glows around thy brow ;
The seraphs are thy playmates now.—
It must be so—and dear, fond boy,
If glad and glorious thus,
'Twere sin to wish thee back from joy,
To pain and care with us !

VIII.

A year hath circled since that day—
That day of doleful gloom,
When thou wert rapt from earth away,
In beauty's opening bloom ;
That day of woe, when, horror-smote,
To know, to feel, that *thou* wert not,
We hung above thy bed of death,
And listen'd to thy last low breath,
And linger'd, nor would turn away,
To own thee but a thing of clay !

That day when *thou* did'st ope thine eyes
In bliss—an angel in the skies!
Oh blind, blank hour for us! Oh dawn
Of endless life for thee!
Noon saw thy soul from earth withdrawn,
Night, at the Saviour's knee.

IX.

Farewell, sweet loan divine, which Heaven,
Beholding that man's heart
Less loved the Giver than the given,
Took to itself apart!
The waves of Time roll on—its sea
Still bears us more remote from thee,
As hour on hour, and day on day,
Melt in the spectral past away.
Yet art thou like a star on high,
To lure from earth the mental eye;
And I would hate my heart, if e'er
Its love of thee it could outwear:
No! in its core, aye to remain,
Thy sainted form shall dwell,
Until on high we meet again:—
Farewell!—dear boy, Farewell!

February 1839.

SONNET.

How change our days! not oftener doth its hue
The lank chameleon change, than we our joys;
The bliss that feeds upon the heart destroys;
Little is done, while much remains to do:
We fix our eyes on phantoms and pursue;
We chase the airy bubbles of the brain;
We leave, for Fancy's lures, the fix'd and true;
Destroy what time hath spared, yet build again:
Years o'er us pass, and age, that comes to few,
Comes but to tell them they have lived in vain;
Sin blights — Death scatters — Hope misleads —
Thought errs—
Joy's icicles melt down before Time's sun—
And, ere the ebbing sands of life be run,
Another generation earth prefers!

VICISSITUDE.

All things around us preach of Death; yet Mirth
Swells the vain heart, darts from the careless eye,
As if we were created ne'er to die,
And had our everlasting home on earth!
All things around us preach of death:—the leaves
Drop from the forests—perish the bright flowers—
Shortens the day's shorn sunlight, hours on hours—
And o'er bleak sterile fields the wild wind grieves.
Yes! all things preach of death—we are born to die:
We are but waves along Time's ocean driven;
Life is to us a brief probation given,
To fit us for a dread Eternity.
Hear ye that watch with Faith's unslumbering eye?—
Earth is our pilgrimage, our home is Heaven!

NOTES TO DOMESTIC VERSES.

1.

Vainly did the Roxburgh shafts assail
Thy moated towers, from which they fell like hail;
While waved Northumbria's pennon o'er thy head.—P. 6.

EVEN so far back as the time of Stephen, Wark or Carrum was considered one of the strongest castles on the English border, and is the second of the five noted places enumerated by Ridpath, (*Border History*, p. 76,) as having been taken by David the First of Scotland, in 1135.

"Carrum," says Richard of Hexham, "is by the English called Wark." After two other close and protracted sieges, in 1138, it was at last taken and demolished, but not until the garrison had been reduced to the necessity of killing and salting their horses for food. They were allowed to depart, retaining their arms; and such was the Scottish King's admiration of their heroic resistance, that he presented them with twenty-four horses in lieu of those that had been thus destroyed.

Being afterwards rebuilt, Wark Castle was again besieged in the reign of Henry the Eighth; and Buchanan, the historian and poet, himself an eyewitness, gives a description of it as it then stood. In the inmost area was a tower of great strength and height, encircled by two walls, the outer of which included

a large space, wherein, in times of danger, the inhabitants of the neighbourhood found shelter for themselves and cattle. The inner was strongly fortified by ditches and towers. It was provided with a garrison, stores of artillery and ammunition, and all things necessary for protracted defence.

The castle of Wark is now so entirely gone, that it is with some difficulty that even the lines of its ancient fortifications can be traced.

2.

Carham whispers of the slaughter'd Dane.—P. 6.

Carham was the scene of a great and decisive defeat of the Danes by the Northumbrian Saxons. It was formerly the seat of an Abbey of Black Canons, subordinate to Kirkham in Yorkshire. Wallace, whose encampment gave name to an adjoining field, burned it down in 1295.

The present church, overshadowed by fine old trees, stands directly on the banks of the Tweed. At its altar the Author took upon himself the matrimonial vows.

3.

To give their whole lives blamelessly to God.—P. 7.

The monks of the beautifully situated Abbey of Dryburgh belonged to the order of *Premonstratenses*, or White Canons. According to Ridpath, (p. 87,) the Monastery of Dryburgh was built by the Constable Hugh de Moreville; but this appears doubtful, as, from a charter of King David, published by Dugdale, (*Monasticon*, vol. ii.,) and said to have been copied from the original by Sir John Balfour, the foundation of the Church of St Mary at Dryburgh is distinctly attributed to that monarch. Be this as it may, it was founded in 1141.

At the Reformation, Dryburgh Abbey became the property of the Halliburtons of Newmains, ultimately represented by "the Mighty Minstrel" whose ashes rest there, in the cemetery of that ancient family. It is now the seat of the Earl of Buchan.

4.

Douglas sleeps with Evers, side by side.—P. 8.

For a detailed account of the battle of Ancrum Moor, where Lord Evers and his son were slain, see Tytler's *Scotland,* vol. v. p. 380-384; or Appendix to that noble ballad "The Eve of St John."—(*Border Minstrelsy,* vol. iv.)

The chivalrous Douglas, killed at Otterburn in the fight with Percy, was interred beneath the high altar of Melrose, "hys baner hangyng over hym."—(*Froissart,* vol. ii.) William Douglas, called the Black Knight of Liddesdale, was also buried here with great pomp and pageantry.—(Godscroft's *History of the House of Douglas,* vol. ii. p. 123.) His tomb is still shown.

In the battle of Ancrum Moor, according to Ridpath, eight hundred of the English were killed, with both their leaders, Evers and Latoun; and a thousand taken prisoners. The Scots are said to have lost only two of their number, and to have treated their enemies with great barbarity.—(*Border History,* p. 553.)

It is strongly suspected, however, that the Scottish historians have not given a fair account of their loss. "Parta autem victoria," says Lesly, (p. 478,) "ita in fugientes sævitum est, ut nihil illustre postea gesserimus, quin potius luculenta ad Musselburghum plaga accepta maximas summæ immanitatis pœnas dederimus."

5.

Thy classic precincts, hallow'd Abbotsford.—P. 9.

This sonnet has been honoured by a translation into Italian—by an accomplished scholar of that country—which appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine,* November 1829. The version is here subjoined:—

A SIR WALTER SCOTT, VISITANDO ABBOTSFORD.

SONETTO.

Placida calma sub pineto ombroso
Scendea col raggio del cadente giorno,
Ed io calcava il sacro suol pensoso
E reverente, alle tue soglie intorno.

Ecco, io dicea, le torri ecco il soggiorno
Dell' ingegno divin, che glorioso
Fe' il secol nostro collo stile adorno
Che non teme del tempo il dente cieco.

Oh come, quando l'infinita schiera
Degli ex viventi giacera sotterra
E Tu pur visto avrai l'ultima sera.

Dereti qui dal più lontan confine
I peregrin verranno della terra
D'este torri a baciar l'alte ruine!

6.

Stern rugged pile! thy scowl recalls the days
Of foray and of feud.—P. 10.

Associated with this ancient Castle, the reader of poetry cannot fail to remember the delicately beautiful legend, regarding a daughter of one of the Earls of March and the young Laird of Tushielaw, as it has afforded a theme for the muse of two of our most celebrated contemporaries—to Sir Walter Scott, in his ballad "The Maid of Neidpath;" and to Mr Campbell, in his song of "Earl March looked on his dying child."

The Castle itself is more distinguished for strength than architectural beauty; and was built by the powerful family of Frazer, from which it passed, by intermarriage, into that of the Hays of Yester, ancestors of the Marquis of Tweeddale. In 1686, the second Earl sold his estates in Peebles-shire to the first Duke of Queensberry, who settled them on his second son, the Earl of March. At the death of the last Duke, the Castle and adjoining estate fell, by succession, to the present Earl of Wemyss, who also assumed the title of Earl of March.

7.

So speaks the ancient melody of thee,
Green "Bush aboon Traquair."—P. 11.

The charming pastoral air, called "The Bonny Bush aboon Traquair," is of great antiquity—indeed, is considered one of the very oldest which has come down to us; but the original words have been long since lost. The verses to which the melody was afterwards adapted, and to which it is now sung,

were the composition of Crauford, the author of "Tweedside," and other popular songs, and first appeared in the *Orpheus Caledonius*, 1725. Along with "The Flowers of the Forest," "The Broom of the Cowden-knowes," "Polwarth on the Green," "Fair Helen of Kirkconnel Lee," and others indigenous to the south of Scotland, it may be adduced as a specimen of what Wordsworth so beautifully designates, the

> ——"Old songs,
> The precious music of the heart."

A few solitary scraggy trees, on a slope overlooking the lawn of Traquair House, mark out the site of the ancient "Bush." Not far distant from these a clump has been planted, which is called "The New Bush." But the spell is untranslateable.

8.

Not lost, but gone before.—P. 30.

The almost Christian sentiment of the great heathen moralist, Seneca.

9.

> ——*It may not be*
> *That thou canst come again to us,*
> *But we, dear child, will go to thee.*—P. 35.

"When David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead.

"Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.

"Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child *while it was* alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread.

"And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and

wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live?

"But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."—2 *Samuel*, xii. 19-23.

10.

————From that day,
He trode serene life's onward way.—P. 38.

Something like the sentiment inculcated in this little poem is that contained in the following epitaph on a child, written by one of the early Christians;—it has been kindly pointed out to me by my erudite friend, Mr William Hay:—

"Parcite vos lachrymis, dulces cum conjuge nato,
Virentemque Deo credite ferre necas."

ELEGIAC EFFUSIONS.

THE BOWER OF PEACE.

I.

When Hope's illusions all have waned,
And silence broods above the dead,
When Sorrow's gloomy clouds have rain'd
Full oft on man's devoted head,—
The time-taught spirit loves to wend
Back through the past its mazy way,
And see the early larks ascend
Up to the gates of day:
While earth, outspread to childhood's glance,
Glow'd like a dream of bright romance.

II.

'Twas in the depth of dazzling May,
When bland the air and blue the skies,
When groves in blossom'd pride were gay,
And flow'rets of innumerous dyes
Gemm'd Earth's green carpet, that I stray'd,
On a salubrious morning bright,
Out to the champaign, and survey'd,
With thrillings of delight,
Landscapes around my path unfurl'd,
That made an Eden of this world.

III.

I listen'd to the blackbird's song,
That from the covert of green trees
Came like a hymn of Heaven along,
Borne on the bloom-enamour'd breeze:
I listen'd to the birds that trill'd,
Each in its turn, some witching note;
With insect swarms the air was fill'd,
Their wintry sleep forgot;
Such was the summer feeling there,
God's love seem'd breathing every where.

IV.

The water-lilies in the waves
Rear'd up their crowns all freshly green,
And, bursting forth as from their graves,
King-cups and daffodils were seen;
The lambs were frisking in the mead;
Beneath the white-flower'd chestnut tree
The ox reclin'd his stately head,
And bent his placid knee;
From brakes the linnets carol'd loud,
While larks responded from the cloud.

V.

I stood upon a high green hill,
On an oak stump mine elbow laid,
And, pondering, leant to gaze my fill
Of glade and glen, in pomp array'd.

Beneath me, on a daisied mound,
A peaceful dwelling I espied,
Girt with its orchard branches round,
And bearing on its side
Rich cherry-trees, whose blossoms white
Half robb'd the windows of their light:—

VI.

There dozed the mastiff on the green—
His night-watch finished; and, elate,
The strutting turkey-cock was seen,
Arching his fan-like tail in state.
There was an air of placid rest
Around the spot so blandly spread,
That sure the inmates must be blest,
Unto my soul I said;
Sin, strife, or sorrow cannot come,
To desolate so sweet a home!

VII.

Far from the hum of crowds remote,
From life's parade and idle show,
'Twould be an enviable lot
Life's silent tenor here to know;
To banish every thought of sin,
To gaze with pure and blameless eyes;
To nurse those holy thoughts within
Which fit us for the skies,
And to regenerate hearts dispense
A bliss akin to innocence.

VIII.

We make our sorrows; Nature knows
Alone of happiness and peace;
'Tis guilt that girds us with the throes
And hydra-pangs that never cease:
Is it not so? And yet we blame
Our fate for frailties all our own,
Giving, with sighs, Misfortune's name
To what is fault alone:
Plunge we in sin's black flood, yet dream
To rise unsullied from such stream?

IX.

Vain thought! far better, then, to shun
The turmoils of the rash and vain,
And pray the Everlasting One
To keep the heart from earthly stain;
Within some sylvan home like this,
To hear the world's far billows roll;
And feel, with deep contented bliss,
They cannot shake the soul,
Or dim the impress bright and grand,
Stamp'd on it by the Maker's hand.

X.

When round this bustling world we look,
What treasures observation there?
Doth it not seem as man mistook
This passing scene of toil and care

For an eternity? As if
This cloud-land were his final home;
And that he mock'd the great belief
Of something yet to come?
Rears he not sumptuous palaces,
As if his faith were built in these? [1]

XL.

To Power he says—"I trust in thee!"
As if terrestrial strength could turn
The avenging shafts of Destiny,
And disappoint the funeral urn:
To Pride—"Behold, I must, and can!"
To Fame—"Thou art mine idol-god!"
To Gold—"Thou art my talisman
And necromantic rod!"
Down Time's far stream he darts his eye,
Nor dreams that he shall ever die.

XII.

Oh, fool, fool, fool!—and is it thus
Thou feed'st of vanity the flame?
The great, the good, are swept from us,
And only live in deed or name.
From out the myriads of the past,
Two only have been spared by Death; [2]
And deem'st thou that a spell *thou* hast
To deprecate his wrath?
Or dost thou hope, in frenzied pride,
By threats to turn his scythe aside?

XIII.

Where are the warrior-chiefs of old?
Where are the realms on which they trod?
While conquest's blood-red flag unroll'd,
And man proclaim'd himself a god!
Where are the sages and their saws,
Whence wisdom shone with dazzling beams?
The legislators, and their laws,
What are they now but dreams?
The prophets, do they still forebode?
Our fathers, where are they?—with God!

XIV.

Our fathers! We ourselves have seen
The days when vigour arch'd each brow—
Our fathers!!—are they aught, I ween,
But household recollections now?
Our fathers!!!—nay, the very boys,
Who, with ourselves, were such at school,
When, nectar-sweet, life's cup of joys
Felt almost over-full,
Although one parish gave them birth,
Their graves are scatter'd o'er the earth!

XV.

Where are the blazon'd dreams of Youth,
And where the friends on whom we leant,
Whose feelings—ay! whose hearts of truth,
Fraternal, with our own were blent?

Where now Romance's rich attire,
In which the universe was drest,
As Evening, like a city on fire,
Burn'd down along the West,
Leaving the enchanted eastern sky
To the round moon's calm argentry?

XVI.

Alas! with care we sow the wind,
To reap the whirlwind for our pains;
On the dark day of need to find
Each proffer'd ransom Time disdains:
All that was once our idle boast,
Weigh'd in the balance dust shall be;
Death knocks—frail man gives up the ghost—
He dies—and where is he?
Vanish'd for ever and forgot,
The place that knew him knows him not!

XVII.

Ho! wanderer, ho!—eschew the wrong,
To reason turn, from error cease;
And list the words of wisdom's tongue,
The still small tongue that whispers peace:
Withhold the heart from worldly strife—
Do good—love mercy—evil fly;
And know that, from this dream call'd life,
We wake but when we die;—
Unto the eager to be pure
The path is straight—the palm is sure!

XVIII.

For ne'er hath prodigal come round,
Subdued in heart and craving grace,
Whate'er his faults, who hath not found
Forgiveness in the Saviour's face;
At contrite hearts he will not scoff—
Whoever knocks, an entrance wins:
Then let us at the Cross throw off
The burden of our sins;
And though their dye be black as night,
His blood can make—has made them white!

WEEP NOT FOR HER.

A DIRGE.

I.

Weep not for her!—Oh! she was far too fair;
Too pure to dwell on this guilt-tainted earth!
The sinless glory, and the golden air
Of Zion, seem'd to claim her from her birth:
A spirit wander'd from its native zone,
Which, soon discovering, took her for its own:
Weep not for her!

II.

Weep not for her!—Her span was like the sky,
Whose thousand stars shine beautiful and bright;
Like flowers that know not what it is to die;
Like long-link'd shadeless months of Polar light;
Like music floating o'er a waveless lake,
While Echo answers from the flowery brake:
Weep not for her!

III.

Weep not for her!—She died in early youth,
Ere hope had lost its rich romantic hues;
When human bosoms seem'd the homes of truth,
And earth still gleam'd with beauty's radiant dews;
Her summer-prime waned not to days that freeze;
Her wine of life was run not to the lees:
Weep not for her!

IV.

Weep not for her!—By fleet or slow decay,
It never grieved her bosom's core to mark
The playmates of her childhood wane away,
Her prospects wither, or her hopes grow dark;
Translated by her God, with spirit shriven,
She pass'd as 'twere in smiles from earth to Heaven:
Weep not for her!

V.

Weep not for her!—It was not hers to feel
The miseries that corrode amassing years,
'Gainst dreams of baffled bliss the heart to steel,
To wander sad down Age's vale of tears;
As whirl the wither'd leaves from Friendship's tree,
And on earth's wintry world alone to be:
Weep not for her!

VI.

Weep not for her!—She is an angel now,
And treads the sapphire floors of Paradise;
All darkness wiped from her refulgent brow,
Sin, sorrow, suffering, banish'd from her eyes;
Victorious over death, to her appear
The vista'd joys of Heaven's eternal year:
Weep not for her!

VII.

Weep not for her!—Her memory is the shrine
Of pleasant thoughts, soft as the scent of flowers;
Calm as on windless eve the sun's decline;
Sweet as the song of birds among the bowers;
Rich as a rainbow with its hues of light;
Pure as the moonshine of an autumn night:
Weep not for her!

VIII.

Weep not for her!—There is no cause for woe;
But rather nerve the spirit, that it walk
Unshrinking o'er the thorny paths below,
And from earth's low defilements keep thee back:
So, when a few fleet severing years have flown,
She'll meet thee at Heaven's gate—and lead thee on!
Weep not for her!

THE FOWLER.

And is there care in Heaven? and is there love
In heavenly spirits to these creatures base,
That may compassion of their evils move?
There is—else much more wretched were the case
Of men than beasts. But O! the exceeding grace
Of highest God, that loves his creatures so,
And all his works with mercy doth embrace,
That blessed angels he sends to and fro,
To serve on wicked man—to serve his wicked foe!

SPENSER.

I.

I HAVE an old remembrance—'tis as old
As childhood's visions, and 'tis mingled with
Dim thoughts and scenes grotesque, by fantasy
From out oblivion's twilight conjured up,
Ere truth had shorn imagination's beams,
Or to forlorn reality tamed down

The buoyant spirit. Yes! the shapes and hues
Of winter twilight, often as the year
Revolves, and hoar-frost grimes the window-sill,
Bring back the lone waste scene that gave it birth,
And make me, for a moment, what I was
Then, on that Polar morn—a little boy,
And Earth again the realm of fairyland.

II

A Fowler was our visitant; his talk
At eve beside the flickering hearth, while howl'd
The outward winds, and hail-drops on the pane
Tinkled, or down the chimney in the flame
Whizz'd as they melted, was of forest and field,
Wherein lay bright wild birds and timorous beasts,
That shunn'd the face of man; and O! the joy,
The passion which lit up his brow, to con
The feats of sleight and cunning skill by which
Their haunts were near'd, or on the heathy hills,
Or 'mid the undergrove; on snowy moor,
Or by the rushy lake—what time the dawn
Reddens the east, or from on high the moon
In the smooth waters sees her pictured orb,
The white cloud slumbering in the windless sky,
And midnight mantling all the silent hills.

III.

I do remember me the very time—
(Though thirty shadowy years have lapsed between)—

'Tis graven as by the hand of yesterday.
For weeks had raved the winds, the angry seas
Howl'd to the darkness, and down fallen the snows;
The redbreast to the window came for crumbs;
Hunger had to the coleworts driven the hare;
The crow at noontide peck'd the travell'd road;
And the wood-pigeon, timorously bold,
Starved from the forest, near'd the homes of man.
It was the dreariest depth of winter-tide,
And on the ocean and its isles was felt
The iron sway of the North; yea, even the fowl—
That through the polar summer months could see
A beauty in Spitzbergen's naked isles,
Or on the drifting icebergs seek a home—
Even they had fled, on southern wing, in search
Of less inclement shores.
Perturb'd by dreams
Pass'd o'er the slow night-watches; many a thought
And many a hope was forward bent on morn;
But weary was the tedious chime on chime,
And hour on hour 'twas dark, and still 'twas dark.
At length we arose—for now we counted five—
And by the flickering hearth array'd ourselves
In coats and 'kerchiefs, for the early drift
And biting season fit; the fowling-piece
Was shoulder'd, and the blood-stain'd game-pouch slung
On this side, and the gleaming flask on that;
In sooth we were a most accordant pair;
And thus accoutred, to the lone sea-shore
In fond and fierce precipitance we flew.

IV.

There was no breath abroad; each in its cave,
As if enchanted, slept the winds, and left
Earth in a voiceless trance: around the porch
All stirlessly the darksome ivy clung;
All silently the leafless trees held up
Their bare boughs to the sky; the atmosphere,
Untroubled in its cold serenity,
Wept icy dews; and now the later stars,
As by some hidden necromantic charm,
Dilate, amid the death-like calm profound,
On the white slumber-mantled earth gazed down.—
Words may not tell, how to the temperament,
And to the hue of that enchanted hour,
The spirit was subdued—a wizard scene!
In the far west, the Pentland's gloomy ridge
Belted the pale blue sky, whereon a cloud,
Fantastic, grey, and tinged with solemn light,
Lay, like a dreaming monster, and the moon,
Waning, above its silvery rim upheld
Her horns—as 'twere the Spectre of the Past.
Silently, silently, on we trode and trode,
As if a spell had frozen up our words:—
White lay the wolds around us, ankle-deep
In new-fallen snows, which champ'd beneath our tread;
And, by the marge of winding Esk, which show'd
The mirror'd stars upon its map of ice,
Downwards in haste we journey'd to the shore
Of Ocean, whose drear, multitudinous voice
Unto the listening spirit of Silence sang.

v.

O leaf! from out the volume of far years
Dissever'd, oft, how oft have the young buds
Of spring unfolded, have the summer skies
In their deep blue o'ercanopied the earth,
And autumn, in September's ripening breeze,
Rustled her harvests, since the theme was one
Present, and darkly all that Future lay,
Which now is of the perish'd and the past!
Since then a generation's span hath fled,
With all its varied whirls of chance and change—
With all its casualties of birth and death;
And, looking round, sadly I feel this world
Another, though the same;—another in
The eyes that gleam, the hearts that throb, the hopes,
The fears, the friendships of the soul; the same
In outward aspect—in the hills which cleave,
As landmarks of historical renown,
With azure peaks the sky; in the green plain,
That spreads its annual wild-flowers to the sun;
And in the river, whose blue course is mark'd
By many a well-known bend and shadowy tree:
Yet o'er the oblivious gulf, whose mazy gloom
Ensepulchres so many things, I see
As 'twere of yesterday—yet robed in tints
Which yesterday has lost, or never had—
The desolate features of that Polar morn,—
Its twilight shadows, and its twinkling stars—
The snows far spreading—the expanse of sand,
Ribb'd by the roaring and receded sea,

And, shedding over all a wizard light,
The waning moon above the dim-seen hills.

VI.

At length, upon the solitary shore
We walk'd of Ocean, which, with sullen voice,
Hollow and never-ceasing, to the north
Sang its primeval song. A weary waste!—
We pass'd through pools, where mussel, clam, and wilk,
Clove to their gravelly beds; o'er slimy rocks,
Ridgy and dark, with dank fresh fuci green,
Where the prawn wriggled, and the tiny crab
Slid sideway from our path, until we gain'd
The land's extremest point, a sandy jut,
Narrow, and by the weltering waves begirt
Around; and there we laid us down and watch'd,
While from the west the pale moon disappear'd,
Pronely, the sea-fowl and the coming dawn.

VII.

Now day with darkness for the mastery strove:
The stars had waned away—all, save the last
And fairest, Lucifer, whose silver lamp,
In solitary beauty, twinkling, shone
'Mid the far west, where, through the clouds of rack
Floating around, peep'd out at intervals
A patch of sky;—straightway the reign of night
Was finish'd, and, as if instinctively,
The ocean flocks, or slumbering on the wave
Or on the isles, seem'd the approach of dawn

To feel; and, rising from afar, were heard
Shrill shrieks and pipings desolate—a pause
Ensued, and then the same lone sounds return'd,
And suddenly the whirring rush of wings
Went circling round us o'er the level sands,
Then died away; and, as we look'd aloft,
Between us and the sky we saw a speck
Of black upon the blue—some huge, wild bird,
Osprey or eagle, high amid the clouds
Sailing majestic, on its plumes to catch
The earliest crimson of the approaching day.

VIII.

'Twere sad to tell our murderous deeds that morn.
Silent upon the chilly beach we lay
Prone, while the drifting snow-flakes o'er us fell,
Like Nature's frozen tears for our misdeeds
Of wanton cruelty. The eider ducks,
With their wild eyes, and necks of changeful blue,
We watch'd, now diving down, now on the surge
Flapping their pinions, of our ambuscade
Unconscious—till a sudden death was found;
While floating o'er us, in the graceful curves
Of silent beauty, down the sea-mew fell;
The gilinot upon the shell-bank lay
Bleeding, and oft, in wonderment, its mate
Flew round, with mournful cry, to bid it rise,
Then shrieking, fled afar; the sand-pipers,
A tiny flock, innumerable, as round
And round they flew, bewail'd their broken ranks;

And the scared heron sought his inland marsh.
With blood-bedabbled plumes around us rose
A slaughter'd hecatomb; and to my heart
(My heart then open to all sympathies)
It spoke of tyrannous cruelty—of man
The desolator; and of some far day,
When the accountable shall make account,
And but the merciful shall mercy find.

IX.

Soul-sicken'd, satiate, and dissatisfied,
An alter'd being homewards I return'd,
My thoughts revolting at the thirst for blood,
So brutalising, so destructive of
The finer sensibilities, which man
In boyhood owns, and which the world destroys.
Nature had preach'd a sermon to my heart:
And from that moment, on that snowy morn—
(Seeing that earth enough of suffering has
And death)—all cruelty my soul abhorr'd,
Yea, loathed the purpose and the power to kill.

THE

DESERTED CHURCHYARD.

I.

THERE lay an ancient churchyard
  Upon a heathy hill,
And oft of yore I loiter'd there,
  Amid the twilight still;
For 'twas a place deserted,
  And all things spake a tone,
Whose wild long music vibrated
  To things for ever gone.

II.

Yes! Nature's face look'd lonelier
  To fancy's brooding eye,
The dusky moors, the mountains,
  And solitary sky;
And there was like a mournfulness
  Upon the fitful breeze,
As it wail'd among the hoary weeds,
  Or mounted through the trees.

III.

Around were gnarly sycamores,
And, by the wizard stream,
I lay in youth's enchanted ring,
When life was like a dream;
And spectral generations pass'd
Before my mind like waves,
Men that for creeping centuries
Had moulder'd in their graves.

IV.

There, as the west was paling,
And the evening-star shone out,
I leant to watch the impish bat,
That flitting shriek'd about;
Or the crow that to the forest,
With travel-wearied wing,
Sail'd through the twilight duskily,
Like some unearthly thing.

V.

The scowl of Desolation
Hung o'er it like a shade;
And Ruin there, amid the moss,
Her silent dwelling made:
Only unto the elements
'Twas free, and human breath
Felt like unhallow'd mockery,
In that calm field of death.

VI.

Within that solitary place
No monuments were seen
Of woman's love, or man's regret,
To tell that such had been;
And to the soul's wild question,
"Oh dead! where are ye flown?"
Waved to and fro, in mournful guise,
The thistle's beard of down.

VII.

There as I linger'd, pondering,
Amid the mantling night,
Upon the old grey wall the hawk
Would silently alight;
And, rushing from the blasted hills,
With rain-drops on its wing,
The wind amid the hemlock-stalks
Would desolately sing.

VIII.

Life, and the living things of earth,
Seem'd vanish'd quite away;
As there, in vague abstraction,
Amid the graves I lay:
The world seem'd an enchanted world,
A region dim and drear,
A shadowy land of reverie,
Where Silence dwelt with Fear.

IX.

'Twas hard to think that Passion
Had stirr'd, how many a breast,
Which now beneath the nettles rank
Decay'd in lonely rest;
That once they loved like kindred,
These unacknowledged dead,
From whose bare, mouldering relics long
The famish'd worm had fled.

X.

For ages there no mourner
To wail his loss had come;
The dead, and their descendants,
Like yesterday, were dumb;
And sang the hoary cannach,
Upon the casual wind,
A dirge for generations
That left no trace behind.

XI.

So dreary and so desolate
That churchyard was, and rude,
That Fantasy upon the verge
Of Night and Chaos stood;
And, like a Sybil's chronicle,
Mysteriously it told,
In hieroglyph and symbol,
The shadowy days of old.

TO A WOOD-PIGEON.

I.

HAVE I scared thee from thy bough,
Tenant of the lonely wild,
Where, from human face exiled,
'Tis thine the sky to plough;
Hearing but the wailing breeze,
Or the cataract's sullen roaring,
Where, 'mid clumps of ancient trees,
O'er its rocks the stream is pouring?—
Up on ready wing thou rushest
To the gloom of woods profound,
And through silent ether brushest
With a whirring sound.

II.

Ring-dove beauteous! is the face
Of man so hateful, that his sight
Startles thee in wild affright,
From beechen resting-place?—
Time was once, when sacrifice,
Served by blue-eyed Druids hoary,

Smoked beneath the woodland skies
O'er their human victims gory ;
And time hath been when veil'd Religion
Bade the calm-brow'd Hermit roam,
Seeking, with the lark and pigeon,
Guilt-untroubled home.

III.

Truly 'twas an erring choice—
If (as Reason says) be given
Earth, preparative for Heaven,
And calm, unclouded joys.
Nobler far 'tis sure to brave
Every barrier which retards us,
Than, to craven fear a slave,
Flee the path that Fate awards us :
He, from duty never altering,
Who, with Faith's heroic ken,
Forward treads with step unfaltering,
Is the man of men !

IV.

Surely pleasant life is thine,
Underneath the shining day ;
Thus from sorrow far away,
'Mid bowering groves to pine—
To pine in wild, luxurious love,
With thy cooing partner near thee ;

Flowers below, and boughs above,
And nought around to fear thee;
While thy bill so gently carries
To thy young, from field or wood,
Seeds, or fruits, or purple berries,
For their slender food.

V.

In sequester'd haunts like thine,
Where, in solitude, the trees
Blossom to the sun and breeze,
Worth has loved to shine;
And ardent Genius structured high
Her magic piles of bright invention,
Achieving immortality,
And sharing not in Time's declension:
Glorious task, that nobly smothers
Earthward cravings, power and pelf,
Scorning, in proud zeal for others,
Every thought of self.

VI.

Time was once, when Man, like thee,
In the forest made his home,
Near the river's yellow foam,
Beneath the spreading tree.
Cities then were not: he dwelt
In the cavern's twilight chamber;

And in adoration knelt,
When the morn with clouds of amber,
Or the wild birds singing round him,
Bade him to the chase arise ;
Then with quiver'd shafts he bound him
'Neath the opal skies.

VII.

Rapidly thou wing'st away—
I saw thee now, a tiny spot—
Again—and now I see thee not—
Nought save the skies of day.
The Psalmist once his prayer addrèss'd—
" Dove, could I thy pinions borrow,
My soul would flee, and be at rest,
Far from Earth's oppressing sorrow ! "[3]
Alas ! we turn to brave the billows
Of the world's tempestuous sway,
Where Life's stream, beneath Care's willows,
Murmurs night and day !

THE YELLOW LEAF.

I.

The year is on the wane—the blue
Of heaven assumes a paler hue;
And when the sun comes forth at morn,
Through melancholy mists forlorn,
Awhile he struggles ere his beam
Falls on the forest and the stream;
And then 'tis with a feebler power
He gilds the day and marks the hour!
Scathed are the mountains and the plains
By sweeping winds and plashing rains,
And both that wintry look assume,
Which speaks to us of wither'd bloom
And vanish'd beauty: roaring floods
Are grown from tiny streams; the woods,
Instead of emerald green, are known
By yellow sere and sullen brown;
And all things which the eyes survey
Are tinged with death, and preach decay!

II.

But yet no hour more sweet than this,
More perfect in its tranquil bliss,
Could man of Heaven desire; the light
Of eve is melting into night,
And from her eastern shrine, where lie,
Pillow'd upon the soft blue sky,
A wreath of snowy clouds, the rim
Of the white moon about to swim
Her course of glory; all around
The scene becomes enchanted ground:
The stream that late in darkness stray'd,
The forest late so black with shade,
Are lighted up; and lo! the hills
A flood of argent glory fills;
While even—far off—the murmuring sea
Is seen in its immensity,
A line of demarcation given
As 'twere between the earth and heaven!

III.

In gazing o'er a scene so fair,
Well may the wondering mind compare
Majestic nature with the strife
And littleness of human life!
Within the rank and narrow span,
Where man contends with brother man,
And where, a few brief seasons past,
Death is the common doom at last,

What find we? In our hour of need,
The generous thought, the liberal deed?—
Or in prosperity, the kind
O'erflowing of congenial mind?
Ah no! instead of these, to Woe
Is ever given another blow;
A drop to Misery's cup of gall;
To Error's feet a further fall;
And, where 'tis least expected, still
Grows up Resentment or Ill-will—
Envy has poison, and has power
To wither Friendship's brightest flower;
And Love, too oft a gilded dream,
Melts like the rain-drop in the stream.

IV.

But Nature grows not old; 'tis we
Who change, and not the flower or tree—
For years, as they revolve, renew
The faded with reviving dew
And genial heat, until as bright
Earth rises on the startled sight,
As when enchanted Adam's eyes
The leafing groves of Paradise—
And shower'd the new-made sun his beams
On spangled plains and crystal streams!

V.

O! could we let the heart retain
Its glow, and dash away the stain

Which sins of others, or our own,
Have made its tablet white upon,
Then might we feel that Earth is not
Entirely an accursed spot;
That gleams of beauty, sparks of bliss,
Flash oft athwart Life's drear abyss;
That from the poison-cup of Woe
A balm of healing oft may flow;
That round the heart are twisted ties
To keep us good, or make us wise;
That duty is the Polar Star
Which leads to peace, though from afar;
And to the pure in heart are given
Visions, whose resting-place is Heaven!

THE DYING SPANIEL.

I.

Old Oscar, how feebly thou crawl'st to the door,
Thou who wert all beauty and vigour of yore;
How slow is thy stagger the sunshine to find,
And thy straw-sprinkled pallet—how crippled and blind!
But thy heart is still living—thou hearest my voice—
And thy faint-wagging tail says thou yet canst rejoice;
Ah! how different art thou from the Oscar of old,
The sleek and the gamesome, the swift and the bold!

II.

At sunrise I waken'd to hear thy proud bark,
With the coo of the house-dove, the lay of the lark;
And out to the green fields 'twas ours to repair,
When sunrise with glory empurpled the air;
And the streamlet flow'd down in its gold to the sea;
And the night-dew like diamond sparks gleam'd from the tree;
And the sky o'er the earth in such purity glow'd,
As if angels, not men, on its surface abode!

III.

How then thou would'st gambol, and start from my feet,
To scare the wild birds from their sylvan retreat;
Or plunge in the smooth stream, and bring to my hand
The twig or the wild-flower I threw from the land:
On the moss-sprinkled stone if I sat for a space,
Thou would'st crouch on the greensward, and gaze in my face,
Then in wantonness pluck up the blooms in thy teeth,
And toss them above thee, or tread them beneath.

IV.

Then I was a schoolboy all thoughtless and free,
And thou wert a whelp full of gambol and glee;
Now dim is thine eyeball, and grizzled thy hair,
And I am a man, and of grief have my share!
Thou bring'st to my mind all the pleasures of youth,
When Hope was the mistress, not handmaid of Truth;
When Earth look'd an Eden, when Joy's sunny hours
Were cloudless, and every path glowing with flowers.

V.

Now Summer is waning; soon tempest and rain
Shall harbinger desolate Winter again,
And Thou, all unable its gripe to withstand,
Shalt die, when the snow-mantle garments the land:
Then thy grave shall be dug 'neath the old cherry-tree,
Which in spring-time will shed down its blossoms on thee;
And, when a few fast-fleeting seasons are o'er,
Thy faith and thy form shall be thought of no more!

VI.

Then all who caress'd thee and loved, shall be laid,
Life's pilgrimage o'er, in the tomb's dreary shade;
Other steps shall be heard on these floors, and the past
Be like yesterday's clouds from the memory cast:
Improvements will follow; old walls be thrown down,
Old landmarks removed, when old masters are gone;
And the gard'ner, when delving, will marvel to see
White bones, where once blossom'd the old cherry-tree!

VII.

Frail things! could we read but the objects around,
In the meanest some deep-lurking truth might be found,
Some type of our frailty, some warning to show
How shifting the sands are we build on below:
Our fathers have pass'd, and have mix'd with the mould;
Year presses on year, till the young become old;
Time, though a stern teacher, is partial to none;
And the friend and the foe pass away, one by one!

EVENING TRANQUILLITY.

I.

How still this hour! the mellow sun
  Withdraws his western ray,
And, evening's haven almost won,
  He leaves the seas of day:
Soft is the twilight reign, and calm,
As o'er autumnal fields of balm
  The languid zephyrs stray;
Across the lawn the heifers roam,
The wearied reaper seeks his home.

II.

The laden earth is rich with flowers,
  All bathed in crimson light;
While hums the bee, mid garden bowers
  With clustering roses bright:
The woods outshoot their shadows dim;
O'er the smooth lake the swallows skim
  In wild erratic flight;
Moor'd by the marge, the shallop sleeps,
Above its deck the willow weeps.

III.

'Tis sweet, in such an hour as this,
To bend the pensive way,
Scan Nature, and partake the bliss
Which charms like hers convey:
No city's bustling noise is near;
And but the little birds you hear,
That chant so blithe and gay;
And ask ye whence their mirth began?
Perchance since free, and far from man.

IV.

Their little lives are void of care;
From bush to brake they fly,
Filling the rich ambrosial air
Of August's vermeil sky:
They flit about the fragrant wood;
Elisha's God provides them food,
And hears them when they cry:
For ever blithe and blest are they,
Their sinless span a summer's day.

V.

Yon bending clouds all purpling streak
The mantle of the west;
And trem'lously the sunbeams break
On Pentland's mountain crest:

Hill, valley, ocean, sky, and stream,
All wear one placid look, and seem
  In silent beauty blest;
As if created Nature raised
To Heaven their choral songs, and praised.

VI.

Above yon cottage on the plain
  The wreathy smoke ascends;
A silent emblem, with the main
  Of sailing clouds it blends;
Like a departed spirit gone
Up from low earth to Glory's throne
  To mix with sainted friends,
Where, life's probation voyage o'er,
Grief's sail is furl'd for evermore!

HYMN TO HESPERUS.

Ἔστιξι πάντα ϕίτις.
SAPPH. *Frag.*

I.

BRIGHT lonely beam, fair heavenly speck,
That, calling all the stars to duty,
Through stormless ether gleam'st to deck
The fulgent west's unclouded beauty;
All silent are the fields, and still
The umbrageous wood's recesses dreary,
As if calm came at thy sweet will,
And Nature of Day's strife were weary.

II.

Blent with the season and the scene,
From out her treasured stores, Reflection
Looks to the days when life was green,
With fond and thrilling retrospection;
The earth again seems haunted ground;
Youth smiles, by Hope and Joy attended;
And bloom afresh young flowers around,
With scent as rich and hues as splendid.

III.

How oft, 'mid eves as clear and calm,
These wild-wood pastures have I stray'd in,
When all these scenes of bliss and balm
Blue Twilight's mantle were array'd in!
How oft I've stole from bustling man,
From Art's parade and city riot,
The sweets of Nature's reign to scan,
And muse on Life in rural quiet!

IV.

Fair Star! with calm repose and peace
I hail thy vesper beam returning;
Thou seem'st to say that troubles cease
In the calm sphere where thou art burning:
Sweet 'tis on thee to gaze and muse;—
Sure angel wings around thee hover,
And from Life's fountain scatter dews
To freshen Earth, Day's fever over.

V.

Star of the Bee! with laden thigh
Thy twinkle warns its homeward winging;
Star of the Bird! thou bidd'st her lie
Down o'er her young, and hush her singing;
Star of the Pilgrim! travel-sore,
How sweet, reflected in the fountains,
He hails thy circlet, gleaming o'er
The shadow of his native mountains!

VI.

Thou art the Star of Freedom, thou
Undo'st the bonds which gall the sorest;
Thou bring'st the ploughman from his plough;
Thou bring'st the woodman from his forest;
Thou bring'st the wave-worn fisher home,
With all his scaly wealth around him;
And bidd'st the hearth-sick schoolboy roam,
Freed from the letter'd tasks that bound him.

VII.

Star of the Mariner! thy car,
O'er the blue waters twinkling clearly,
Reminds him of his home afar,
And scenes he still loves, ah, how dearly!
He sees his native fields, he sees
Grey twilight gathering o'er his mountains,
And hears the rustle of green trees,
The bleat of flocks, and gush of fountains.

VIII.

How beautiful, when, through the shrouds,
The fierce presaging storm-winds rattle,
Thou glitterest far above the clouds,
O'er waves that lash, and gales that battle;
And as, athwart the billows driven,
He turns to thee in fond devotion,
Star of the Sea! thou tell'st that Heaven
O'erlooks alike both land and ocean.

IX.

Star of the Mourner! 'mid the gloom,
When droops the West o'er Day departed,
The widow bends above the tomb
Of him who left her broken-hearted:
Darkness within, and Night around,
The joys of life no more can move her,
When lo! thou lightest the profound,
To tell that Heaven's eye glows above her.

X.

Star of the Lover! O, how bright
Above the copsewood dark thou shinest,
As longs he for those eyes of light,
For him whose lustre burns divinest!
Earth and the things of earth depart,
Transform'd to scenes and sounds Elysian;
Warm rapture gushes o'er his heart,
And Life seems like a faëry vision.

XI.

Yes, thine the hour when, daylight done,
Fond Youth to Beauty's bower thou lightest;
Soft shines the moon, bright shines the sun,
But thou, of all things, softest, brightest.
Still is thy beam as fair and young,
The torch illuming Evening's portal,
As when of thee lorn Sappho sung,
With burning soul, in lays immortal.

XII.

Star of the Poet! thy pale fire,
Awakening, kindling inspiration,
Burns in blue ether, to inspire
The loftiest themes of meditation;
He deems some holier, happier race
Dwells in the orbit of thy beauty,—
Souls of the Just, redeem'd by grace,
Whose path on earth was that of duty.

XIII.

Beneath thee Earth turns Paradise
To him, all radiant, rich, and tender;
And dreams arrayed by thee arise
'Mid Twilight's dim and dusky splendour:
Blest or accurst each spot appears;
A frenzy fine his fancy seizes;
He sees unreal shapes, and hears
The wail of spirits on the breezes.

XIV.

Bright leader of the hosts of Heaven!
When day from darkness God divided,
In silence through the empyrean driven,
Forth from the East thy chariot glided:
Star after star, o'er night and earth,
Shone out in brilliant revelation;
And all the angels sang for mirth,
To hail the finished, fair Creation.

XV.

Star of declining Day, farewell !—
Ere lived the Patriarchs, thou wert yonder ;
Ere Isaac, 'mid the piny dell,
Went forth at eventide to ponder :
And when to Death's stern mandate bow
All whom we love, and all who love us,
Thou shalt uprise, as thou dost now,
To shine, and shed thy tears above us.

XVI.

Star that proclaims Eternity!
When o'er the lost Sun Twilight weepeth,
Thou light'st thy beacon-tower on high,
To say, "He is not dead, but sleepeth ;"
And forth with Dawn thou comest too,
As all the hosts of Night surrender,
To prove thy sign of promise true,
And usher in Day's orient splendour.

FADED FLOWERS.

I.

FAREWELL, ye perish'd flowers
That on the cold ground lie;
How gay ye smiled
'Mid the brown wild,
'Neath summer's painted sky;—
Pass'd hath your bloom away;
Your stalks are sere and bent:
On the howling blast
The rain sweeps past,
From the dim firmament.

II.

I think me of your pride,
When Zephyr came with Spring;
Then sigh to know
What wreck and woe
A few brief months may bring!
Emblems of human fate,
Ye say—"Though bright and fair
Life's morning be,
Its eve may see
The clouds of grief and care!"

III.

In you I scan the fate
Life's sunniest hopes have met,
When Youth's bright noon,
(Alas! how soon!)
In manhood's twilight set—
Yes! joy by joy decay'd
As ye did fade, sweet blooms,
Leaving behind,
Upon the wind,
Awhile your soft perfumes.

IV.

As waned each blossom bright,
So doom'd were to depart
Friend after friend—
And each to rend
A fibre from the heart:
Green Spring again shall bid
Your boughs with bloom be crown'd;
But alas! to Man,
In earth's brief span,
No second spring comes round!

V.

Yes! friends who clomb Life's hill
Together, long ago,
Are parted, and
Their fatherland
No more their places know!

We see them not, nor hear them,
Among the garden bowers;
They have pass'd away
In bright decay,
Like you, ye perish'd flowers!

VI.

Mourn not—we meet again,
Although we meet not here;
Turn ye above,
Where Faith and Love
Taste Heaven's eternal year:—
For though Time's winter bows
The grey head to the clod,
Dust goes to dust,
But (as we trust)
The Spirit back to God!

THE NIGHT HAWK.

Vox, et præterea nihil.

I.

The winds are pillow'd on the waveless deep,
And from the curtain'd sky the midnight moon
Looks sombred o'er the forest depths, that sleep
Unstirring, while a soft melodious tune,
Nature's own voice, the lapsing stream, is heard,
And ever and anon th' unseen, night-wandering bird.

II.

An Arab of the air, it floats along,
Enamour'd of the silence and the night,
The tall pine-tops, the mountains dim among,
Aye wheeling on in solitary flight;
Like an ungentle spirit earthwards sent,
To haunt the pale-faced moon, a cheerless banishment.

III.

A lone, low sound—a melancholy cry,
  Now near, remoter now, and more remote;
In the blue dusk, unseen, it journeys by,
  Loving amid the starlight-calm to float;
Now sharp and shrill, now faint; and by degrees
Fainter, like summer winds that die 'mid leafy trees.

IV.

Listening, in the blue solitude I stand—
  The breathless hush of midnight—all is still;
Unmoved the valleys spread, the woods expand;
  There is a slumbering mist upon the hill;
Nature through all her regions seems asleep,
Save, ever and anon, that sound so wild and deep.

V.

Moonlight and midnight! all so vast and void,
  Life seems a vision of the shadowy past,
By mighty silence swallow'd and destroy'd,
  And Thou of living things the dirge and last:
Such quietude enwraps the moveless scene,
As if, all discord o'er, Mankind had never been.

VI.

Doubtless in elder times, unhallow'd sound,
When Fancy ruled the subject realms, and Fear,
Some demon elf, or goblin shrieking round,
Darkly thou smot'st on Superstition's ear:
The wild wood had its spirits, and the glen
Swarm'd with dim shapes and shades inimical to Men.

VII.

Then Fairies tripp'd it in the hazel glade;
And Fahm stalk'd muttering thro' the cavern's gloom;[4]
And corpse-fires, glancing thro' the yew-trees' shade,
Lighted each sheeted spectre from its tomb;
While Morning show'd, in nature's grassy death,
Where the Foul Fiend had danced with Witches on the heath.

VIII.

On Summer's scented eve, when fulgent skies
The last bright traces of the day partook,
And heaven look'd down on earth with starry eyes,
Reflected softly in the wimpling brook,
Far, far above, wild solitary bird,
Thy melancholy scream 'mid woodlands I have heard;

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IX.

And I have heard thee, when December's snow
  Mantled with chilling white the moonless vales,
Thro' the drear darkness, wandering to and fro,
  And mingling with the sharp and sighing gales
Thy wizard note—when Nature's prostrate form,
In desolation sad, lay buried in the storm.

X.

It is a sound most solemn, strange, and lone,
  That wildly talks of something far remote
Amid the past—of something dimly known—
  Of Time's primeval voice, a parted note—
The echo of Antiquity—the cry
Of Ruin, fluttering o'er some Greatness doom'd to die.

XI.

So parted from communion with mankind,
  So sever'd from all life, and living sound,
Calmly the solemnised and soften'd mind
  Sinks down, and dwells, in solemn thought profound,
On dreams of yore, on visions swept away—
The loves and friendships warm of being's early day.

XII.

Lov'st Thou, when storms are dark, and rains come down,
When wild winds round lone dwellings moan and sigh,
And Night is hooded in its gloomiest frown,
To mingle with the tempest thy shrill cry,
To pierce the rolling thunder-clouds, and brook
The scythe-wing'd lightning's glare with fierce unshrinking look?

XIII.

Most lonely voice! most wild unbodied scream!
Aye haunting thus the sylvan wilderness,
Thou tellest man that life is but a dream,
Romantic as the tones of thy distress,
Leaving on earth no lingering trace behind,
And melting as thou meltest on the trackless wind.

XIV.

Faint come the notes: Thou meltest distant far,
Scarce heard at intervals upon the night,
Leaving to loneliness each listening star,
The trees, the river, and the moonshine bright;
And, 'mid this stirless hush, this still of death,
Heard is my bosom's throb, and audible my breath.

XV.

Thus wane the noonday dreams of Youth away,
And twilight hues the path of Life pervade;
Thus, like the western sunlight, ray by ray,
Into the darkness of old age we fade;
While of our early friends the memories seem
Half lost in bygone years, like fragments of a dream.

XVI.

Lo! 'mid the future dim, remote or near,
Lurks in the womb of Time a final day,
When shuddering Earth a trumpet voice shall hear,
And ruin seize the Universe for prey;
And Silence, as the pulse of Nature stills,
In viewless robe, shall sit enthroned on smoking hills.

STARLIGHT REFLECTIONS.

I.

On this grey column—overthrown
By giant Time's unsparing hand,
Where lichens spring and moss is strown
Along the desert land—
Resting alone, I fix mine eye,
With feelings of sublime delight,
On June's resplendent galaxy,
The studded arch of night.
How awful is the might of *Him*
Who stretch'd the skies from pole to pole!
And breathed, through chaos waste and dim,
Creation's living soul!
A thousand worlds are glowing round,
And thousands more than sight can trace
Revolve throughout the vast profound,
And fill the realms of space:
Then what is man? It ill befits
That such should hear or heed the prayer—
Lip-mockery of the worm that sits
Within the scorner's chair!

II.

There are no clouds to checker night;
The winds are hush'd, the skies serene;
The landscape, outlined darkly bright,
Is still distinctly seen:
Remotest Ocean's tongue is heard
Declaiming to his island shores;
And wails the lonely water-bird
From yonder marshy moors.
This is the realm of solitude;
A season and a scene for thought,
When Melancholy well may brood
On years, that now are not—
On syren years, whose witchery smiled,
Ere time had leagued the heart with strife—
The Eden of this earthly wild—
The paradise of life.
They feign, who tell us wealth can strike
In to the thornless paths of bliss;
Alas! its best is, Judas-like,
To sell us with a kiss.

III.

Ambition is a gilded toy,
A baited hook, a trap of guile;
Alluring only to destroy,
And mocking with a smile.
Alas! for what hath youth exchanged
The garden of its vernal prime?

Is Care—Sin—Sorrow—more estranged,
More gently lenient Time?
Doth Friendship quaff from bowl more deep?
Bathes Hope in more delightful streams?
Comes Love to charm the pillow'd sleep
With brighter, holier dreams?
Ah, no! the ship of life is steer'd
More boldly to the central main,
Only to cope with tempests fear'd,
Lightning, and wind, and rain!
Around lurks shipwreck; hidden rocks
Beneath the billows darkling lie;
Death threatens in the breaker's shocks
And thunder-cloven sky!

IV.

Hearken to Truth! Though joys remain,
And friends unchanged and faithful prove,
The heart can never love again
As when it learn'd to love:
Oh! ne'er shall manhood's bosom feel
The raptures boyhood felt of yore;
Nor fancy lend, nor life reveal
Such faëry landscapes more!
Above the head when tempests break,
When cares flit round on ebon wing,
When Hope o'er being's troubled lake
No sunny gleam can fling;
When Love's clear flame no longer burns,

And Griefs distract, and Fears annoy,
Then Retrospection fondly turns
To long-departed joy—
The visions brought by sleep, the dreams
By scarce-awaken'd daylight brought,
And reveries by sylvan streams,
And mountains far remote.

v.

Elysium's hues have fled: the joy
Of youth departs on seraph wing;
Soon breezes from the Pole destroy
The opening blooms of Spring!
We gaze around us; earth seems bright
With flowers and fruit, the skies are blue;
The bosom flutters with delight,
And deems the pageant true:—
Then lo! a tempest darkles o'er
The summer plain and waveless sea;
Lash the hoarse billows on the shore;
Fall blossoms from the tree;
Star after star is quench'd; the night
Of blackness gathers round in strife;
And storms howl o'er a scene of blight;—
Can such be human life?
Expanding beauties charm the heart,
The garden of our life is fair;
But in a few short years we start,
To find a desert there!

VI.

Stars! far above that twinkling roll—
  Stars! so resplendent, yet serene—
Ye look (ah! how unlike the soul)
  As ye have ever been:
In you 'tis sweet to read at eve
  The themes of youth's departed day,
Call up the past, and fondly grieve
  O'er what hath waned away—
The faces that we see no more;
  The friends whom Fate hath doom'd to roam;
Or silence, through Death's iron door,
  Call'd to his cheerless home!
O! that the heart again were young;
  O! that the feelings were as kind,
Artless and innocent; the tongue
  The oracle of mind:
O! that the sleep of Night were sweet,
  Gentle as childhood's sleep hath been,
When angels, as from Jacob's feet,
  Soar'd earth and Heaven between.

VII.

What once hath been no more can be—
  'Tis void, 'tis visionary all;
The past hath joined eternity—
  It comes not at the call.
No! worldly thoughts and selfish ways
  Have banish'd Truth, to rule instead;

We, dazzled by a meteor-blaze,
Have run where Folly led;
Yet happiness was found not there—
The spring-bloom of the heart was shed;
We turn'd from Nature's face, though fair,
To muse upon the dead!
As dewdrops from the sparry cave
Trickling, new properties impart,
A tendency Life's dealings have
To petrify the heart.
There is an ecstasy in thought,
A soothing warmth, a pleasing pain;
Away! such dreams were best forgot—
They shall not rise again!

TO

A WOUNDED PTARMIGAN.

I.

HAUNTER of the herbless peak,
Habitant 'twixt earth and sky,
Snow-white bird of bloodless beak,
Rushing wing, and rapid eye,
Hath the Fowler's fatal aim
Of thy freeborn rights bereft thee,
And, 'mid natures curb'd or tame,
Thus encaged, a captive left thee?—
Thee, who Earth's low valleys scorning,
From thy cloud-embattled nest
Wont to catch the earliest morning
Sunbeam on thy breast!

II.

Where did first the light of day
See thee bursting from thy shell?
Was it where Ben-Nevis grey
Towers aloft o'er flood and fell?
Or where down upon the storm
Plaided shepherds gaze in wonder,

Round thy rocky sides, Cairngorm,
Rolling with its clouds and thunder?
Or with summit, heaven-directed,
Where Benvoirlich views, in pride,
All his skyey groves reflected
In Loch Ketturin's tide?

III.

Boots it not—but this we know
That a wild free life was thine,
Whether on the peak of snow
Or amid the clumps of pine;
Now on high begirt with heath,
Now, decoy'd by cloudless weather,
To the golden broom beneath,
Happy with thy mates together;
Yours were every cliff and cranny
Of your birth's majestic hill;—
Tameless flock! and ye were many,
Ere the spoiler came to kill!

IV.

Gazing, wintry bird, at thee,
Thou dost bring the wandering mind
Visions of the Polar Sea—
Where, impell'd by wave and wind,
Drift the icebergs to and fro,
Crashing oft in fierce commotion,

While the snorting whale below,
In its anger tumults ocean ;—
Naked, treeless shores, where howling
Tempests vex the brumal air,
And the famish'd wolf-cub prowling
Shuns the fiercer bear :—

v.

And far north the daylight dies—
And the twinkling stars alone
Glitter through the icy skies,
Down from mid-day's ghastly throne ;
And the moon is in her cave ;
And no living sound intruding,
Save the howling wind and wave,
'Mid that darkness ever brooding ;
Morn as 'twere in anger blotted
From Creation's wistful sight,
And Time's progress only noted
By the Northern Light.

VI.

Sure 'twas sweet for thee, in spring,
Nature's earliest green to hail,
As the cuckoo's slumberous wing
Dreamt along the sunny vale ;
As the blackbird from the brake
Hymn'd the Morning Star serenely ;

And the wild swan o'er the lake,
Ice-unfetter'd, oar'd it queenly;
Brightest which?—the concave o'er thee
Deepening to its summer hue,
Or the boundless moors before thee,
With their bells of blue?

VII.

Then from larchen grove to grove,
And from wild-flower glen to glen,
Thine it was in bliss to rove,
High o'er hills, and far from men;
Wilds Elysian! not a sound
Heard except the torrents booming;
Nought beheld for leagues around
Save the heath in purple blooming:
Why that startle? From their shieling
On the hazel-girded mount,
'Tis the doe and fawn down stealing
To the silvery fount.

VIII.

Sweet to all the summer time—
But how sweeter far to thee,
Sitting in thy home sublime,
High o'er cloud-land's soundless sea;
Or if morn, by July drest,
Steep'd the hill-tops in vermilion,

Or the sunset made the west
Even like Glory's own pavilion;
While were fix'd thine ardent eyes on
Realms, outspread in blooming mirth,
Bounded but by the horizon
Belting Heaven to Earth.

IX.

Did the Genius of the place,
Which of living things but you
Had for long beheld no trace,
That unhallow'd visit rue?
Did the gather'd snow of years
Which begirt that mountain's forehead,
Thawing, melt as 'twere in tears,
O'er that natural outrage horrid?
Did the lady-fern hang drooping,
And the quivering pine-trees sigh,
As, to cheer his game-dogs whooping,
Pass'd the spoiler by?

X.

None may know—the dream is o'er—
Bliss and beauty cannot last;
To that haunt, for evermore,
Ye are creatures of the past!
And for you it mourns in vain;
While the dirgeful night-breeze only

Sings, and falls the fitful rain,
'Mid your homes forlorn and lonely.
Ye have pass'd—the bonds enthral you
Of supine and wakeless death;
Never more shall spring recall you
To the scented heath!

XI.

Such their fate—but unto thee,
Bleeding bird! protracted breath,
Hopeless, drear captivity,
Life which in itself is death:—
Yet alike the fate of him
Who, when all his views are thwarted,
Finds earth but a desert dim,
Relatives and race departed;
Soon are Fancy's realms Elysian
Peopled by the brood of Care;
And Truth finds Hope's gilded vision
Painted but—in air.

THE

CHILD'S BURIAL IN SPRING.

I.

WHERE Ocean's waves to the hollow caves murmur a low wild hymn,
In pleasant musing I pursued my solitary way;
Then upwards wending from the shore, amid the woodlands dim,
From the gentle height, like a map in sight, the downward country lay.

II.

'Twas in the smile of "green Aprile,"[5] a cloudless noontide clear;
In ecstasy the birds sang forth from many a leafing tree;
Both bud and bloom, with fresh perfume, proclaim'd the awaken'd year;
And Earth, array'd in beauty's robes, seem'd Heaven itself to be.

III.

So cheerfully the sun shone out, so smilingly the sky
O'erarch'd green earth, so pleasantly the stream meander'd on,
So joyous was the murmur of the honey-bee and fly,
That of our fall, which ruin'd all, seem'd traces few or none.

IV.

Then hopes, whose gilded pageantry wore all the hues of truth—
Elysian thoughts — Arcadian dreams — the poet's fabling strain—
Again seem'd shedding o'er our world an amaranthine youth,
And left no vestiges behind of death, decay, or pain.

V.

At length I reach'd a churchyard gate—a churchyard? Yes! but there
Breathed out such calm serenity o'er every thing around,
That "the joy of grief" (as Ossian sings) o'erbalm'd the very air,
And the place was less a mournful place than consecrated ground.

VI.

Beneath the joyous noontide sun, beneath the cloudless sky,
'Mid bees that humm'd, and birds that sang, and flowers that gemm'd the wild,
The sound of measured steps was heard—a grave stood yawning by—
And lo! in sad procession slow, the Funeral of a Child!

VII.

I saw the little coffin borne unto its final rest;
The dark mould shovell'd o'er it, and replaced the daisied sod;
I mark'd the deep convulsive throes that heaved the Father's breast,
As he return'd (too briefly given!) that loan of love to God!

VIII.

Then rose in my rebellious heart unhallow'd thoughts and wild,
Daring the inscrutable decrees of Providence to scan—
How death should be allotted to a pure, a sinless child,
And length of days the destiny of sinful, guilty man!

IX.

The laws of the material world seem'd beautiful and clear;
The day and night, the bloom and blight, and seasons as they roll
In regular vicissitude to form a circling year,
Made up of parts dissimilar, and yet a perfect whole.

X.

But darkness lay o'er the moral way which man is told to tread;
A shadow veil'd the beam divine by Revelation lent:
"How awfully mysterious are thy ways, O Heaven!" I said;
"We see not whence, nor know for what fate's arrows oft are sent!

XI.

Under the shroud of the sullen cloud, when the hills are capp'd with snow,
When the moaning breeze, through leafless trees, bears tempest on its wing—
In the Winter's wrath, we think of death; but not when lilies blow,
And, Lazarus-like, from March's tomb walks forth triumphant Spring.

XII.

As in distress o'er this wilderness I mused of stir and strife,
Where, 'mid the dark, seem'd scarce a mark our tangled path to scan,
A shadow o'er the season fell; a cloud o'er human life—
A veil to be by Eternity but ne'er by time withdrawn!

SPRING HYMN.

I.

How pleasant is the opening year!
The clouds of Winter melt away;
The flowers in beauty reappear;
The songster carols from the spray;
Lengthens the more refulgent day;
And bluer glows the arching sky;
All things around us seem to say—
"Christian! direct thy thoughts on high."

II.

In darkness, through the dreary length
Of Winter slept both bud and bloom;
But Nature now puts forth her strength,
And starts renew'd, as from the tomb;
Behold an emblem of thy doom,
O man!—a star hath shone to save—
And morning yet shall re-illume
The midnight darkness of the grave!

III.

Yet ponder well, how then shall break
The dawn of second life on thee—
Shalt thou to hope—to bliss awake?
Or vainly strive God's wrath to flee?
Then shall pass forth the dread decree,
That makes or weal or woe thine own:
Up, and to work! Eternity
Must reap the harvest Time hath sown.

OCTOBER—A SKETCH.

In spring, in summer, in autumnal wane,
How beautiful are Nature's thousand hues!
And which the fairest who can say? For each
In turn is passing fair, possesses charms
Peculiar, and upon the heart and mind
Leaves an imperial impress. Blandly crown'd
With crocus and with snowdrop coronal,
First comes the vestal Spring, with emerald scarf
And cheeks of glowing childhood. Summer next,
With all her gay and gorgeous trappings on,
Rejoicing in the glory of her youth,
And braiding roses in her auburn hair,
Under the light of the meridian sun,
In the green covert of a spreading beech:
While all around the fields are musical
With song of bird, and hum of bee. And lo!
Matronly Autumn passes, bright at first
In eye, and firm of step, her cincture rich,
Of wheat-ear and of vine-wreath intertwined;
But sadness dwells in her departing look,

And darklier glooms the atmosphere around,
Till Winter meets her on the desert heath,
And breathes consumption on her sallow cheek.

The year is now declining, and the air,
When morning blushes on the orient hills,
Embued with icy chillness. Ocean's wave
Has lost its tepid glow, and slumbering fogs
Brood o'er its level calm on windless days;
Yet when enshrined at his meridian height,
The sun athwart the fading landscape smiles
With most paternal kindness, softly warm,
And delicately beautiful—a Prince
Blessing the realms whose glory flows from him.
From bough to bough of the thick holly-tree
The spider weaves his net; the gossamer—
A tenuous line, glistening at intervals—
Now floats and now subsides upon the air;
The foliage of the forest, brown and sere,
Drops on the margin of the stubble-field,
In which the partridge lingers insecure,
And raises oft at sombre eventide,
With plaintive throat, a wild and tremulous cry.
The sickle of the husbandman hath ceased,
Leaving the lap of nature shorn and bare,
And even the latest gleaner disappear'd.
The dandelion, from the wayside path,
Its golden sun eclipsed, hath pass'd away;
And the sere nettle seeds along the bank.
The odorous clover flowers—these purely white,

Those richly purple—now are seen no more ;
The perfume of the bean-field has decay'd ;
And roams the wandering bee o'er many a strath,
For blossoms which have perish'd. Grassy blades,
Transparent, taper, and of sickly growth,
Shoot, soon to wither, in the sterile fields,
Doom'd in their spring to premature old age.
The garden fruits have mellow'd with the year,
Have mellow'd, and been gathered—all are gone ;
And save the lingering nectarine—but half,
Not wholly reconcil'd to us—remains
Nor trace nor token of the varied wealth
Which Summer boasted in her cloudless prime.
Yet on the wild-brier grows the yellow hip ;
The dew-sprent bramble shows its clusters ripe ;
Reddens, 'mong fading branches, the harsh sloe ;
And from the mountain-ash, in scarlet pride,
The fairy bunches drop their countless beads
In richness ; on the lithe laburnum's bough,
Mix pods of lighter green among the leaves ;
And, on the jointed honeysuckle's stalk,
The succulent berries hang. The robin sits
Upon the mossy gateway, singing clear
A requiem to the glory of the woods—
The bright umbrageousness, which, like a dream,
Hath perish'd and for ever passed away ;
And, when the breeze awakes, a frequent shower
Of wither'd leaves bestrew the weeded paths,
Or from the branches of the willow whirl,
With rustling sound, into the turbid stream.

Yet there is still a brightness in the sky—
A most refulgent and translucent blue :
Still, from the ruin'd tower, the wallflower tells
Mournfully of what midsummer's pride hath been ;
And still the mountains heave their ridgy sides
In pastoral greenness. Melancholy time !
Yet full of sweet sad thought ; for everything
Is placid, if not joyful, as in Spring,
When Hope was keen, and, with an eagle eye,
Pry'd forward to the glories yet to come.

There cannot be a sweeter hour than this,
Even now, altho' encompass'd with decay,
To him who knows the world wherein he lives,
And all its mournful mutabilities !
There is not on the heavens a single cloud ;
There is not in the air a breathing wind ;
There is not on the earth a sound of grief ;
Nor in the bosom a repining thought :—
Faith having sought and gained the mastery,
Quiet and contemplation mantle all !

NOTES TO ELEGIAC EFFUSIONS.

1.

Rears he not sumptuous palaces,
As if his faith were built in these?—P. 59.

MANY years ago, in sauntering through the Abbey burial-ground of Melrose, the Author was much struck with the following inscription on a small but venerable tombstone—

"The Earth walks upon the earth, glistering like gold;
The Earth goeth to the earth sooner than it wold;
The Earth builds upon the earth temples and tow'rs;
But the earth sayeth to the Earth all shall be ours!"

He has since learned that the original appertains to a churchyard in Gloucestershire, from which the above is only a transcription.

2.

Two only have been spared by Death.—P. 59.

"Christians looking on death not only as the sting, but the period and end of sin, the horizon and isthmus between this life and a better, and the death of this world but as the nativity of another, do contentedly submit unto the common necessity, and envy not *Enoch* nor *Elias*."—SIR THOMAS BROWNE'S *Letter to a Friend.*

3.

The Psalmist once his prayer address'd—
"Dove, could I thy pinions borrow."—P. 80.

"O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I flee away, and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off, and

remain in the wilderness. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest."—*Psalm* lv. 6-8.

The same sentiment has afforded a groundwork for a beautiful lyric by Mrs Hemans—"The Wings of the Dove"—of which part of the above quotation is the motto. It was also evidently thrilling through the heart of Keats in these lines from his deep-thoughted "Ode to the Nightingale:"—

> "That—I might leave the world unseen,
> And with thee fade away into the forest dim:
> Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
> What thou among the leaves hast never known,
> The weariness, the fever, and the fret
> Here, where men sit, and hear each other groan," &c.

4.

Fahm stalk'd muttering thro' the cavern's gloom.—P. 101.

Fahm—a deformed and malignant spirit, peculiar to the Highlands of Scotland, and more particularly to the mountains surrounding Glen-Avin. His accustomed visitations to earth are said to be immediately preceding daybreak; and he is accused by the natives of inflicting diseases upon their cattle. If any person happens to cross his track before the sun has shone on it, death is believed to be the inevitable consequence.

Popular report also denies vegetation to the spots where witches have held their orgies, or been burned.

5.

'Twas in the smile of "green Aprile."—P. 117.

"Grene Aprile," the favourite appellation of the month by Chaucer, Spenser, Browne, and the older poets.

A prose character, equally impregnated with emerald, is given to its personification, in a curious duodecimo of 1681, entitled "The Queen-like Closet or Rich Cabinet," quoted in Hone's "Every-Day Book," (vol. ii. 517,) by Charles Lamb, in which the fair author, Anne Wooley, thus describes him:—

"Aprile—A young man in green, with a garland of myrtle, and hawthorn buds; Winged; in one hand Primroses and Violets, in the other the sign *Taurus*."

POEMS ON FLOWERS.

THE

BIRTH OF THE FLOWERS.

A VISION.

I.

ONCE on a time, when all was still,
When midnight mantled vale and hill,
And over earth the stars were keeping
Their lustrous watch, it has been said,
A Poet on his couch lay sleeping,
As pass'd a vision through his head :
It may be rash—it can't be wrong
To pencil what he saw in song ;
And if we go not far amiss,
'Twas this—or something like to this.

II.

Firstly, through parting mists, his eye
The snowy mountain-peaks explored,
Where, in the dizzying gulfs of sky,
The daring eagle wheel'd and soar'd ;

And, as subsiding lower, they
Own'd the bright empire of the day,
Softly array'd in living green,
The summits of the hills were seen,
On which the orient radiance play'd,
Girt with their garlands of broad trees,
Whose foliage twinkled in the breeze,
And form'd a lattice-work of shade:
And darker still, and deeper still,
As widen'd out each shelving hill,
Dispersing placidly they show'd
The destined plains for Man's abode—
Meadow, and mount, and champaign wide;
And sempiternal forests, where
Wild beasts and birds find food and lair;
And verdant copse by river side,
Which threading these—a silver line—
Was seen afar to wind and shine
Down to the mighty Sea that wound
Islands and continents around,
And, like a snake of monstrous birth,
In its grim folds encircled earth!

III.

Then wider as awoke the day,
Was seen a speck—a tiny wing
That, from the sward, drifting away,
Rose up at heaven's gate, to sing
A matin hymn melodious: Hark!
That orison!—it was the lark,

Hailing the advent of the sun,
Forth like a racer come to run
His fiery course ; in brilliant day
The vapours vanishing away,
Had left to his long march a clear,
Cloud-unencumber'd atmosphere ;
And glow'd, as on a map unfurl'd,
The panorama of the world.

IV.

Fair was the landscape—very fair—
Yet something still was wanting there ;
Something, as 'twere, to lend the whole
Material world a type of soul.
The Dreamer wist not what might be
The thing a-lacking ; but while he
Ponder'd in heart the matter over,
Floating between him and the ray
Of the now warm refulgent day,
What is it that his eyes discover ?
As through the fields of air it flew,
Larger it loom'd, and fairer grew
That form of beauty and of grace,
Which bore of grosser worlds no trace,
Until, as Earth's green plains it near'd,
Confest, an Angel's self appeared.

V.

Eye could not gaze on shape so bright,
Which from its atmosphere of light,

And love, and beauty, shed around,
From every winnow of her wings,
Upon the fainting air, perfumes
Sweeter than Thought's imaginings;
And at each silent bend of grace,
The Dreamer's raptured eye could trace,
(Far richer than the peacock's plumes,)
A rainbow shadow on the ground,
As if from out Elysium's bowers,
From brightest gold to deepest blue,
Blossoms of every form and hue
Had fallen to earth in radiant showers.

VI.

Vainly would human words convey
Spiritual music, or portray
Seraphic loveliness—the grace
Flowing like glory from that face,—
Which, as 'twas said of Una's, made
Where'er the sinless virgin stray'd,
A sunshine in the shady place:
The snow-drop was her brow; the rose
Her cheek; her clear full gentle eye
The violet in its deepest dye;
The lily of the Nile her nose;
Before the crimson of her lips
Carnations waned in dim eclipse;
And downwards o'er her shoulders white,
As the white rose in fullest blow,

Her floating tresses took delight
To curl in hyacinthine flow:
Her vesture seem'd as from the blooms
Of all the circling seasons wove,
With magic warp in fairy looms,
And tissued with the woof of Love.

VII.

Transcendent joy!—a swoon of bliss!
Was ever rapture like to this?
Spell-bound as if in ecstasy,
The visionary's half-shut eye
Drank in those rich, celestial gleams,
Which dart from dreams involved in dreams;
When, as 'twere from a harp of Heaven,
Whose tones are to the breezes given,
While from the ocean zephyr sighs,
And twilight veils Creation's eyes,
In music thus a voice awoke,
And to his wilder'd senses spoke:—

VIII.

"'Tis true man's earth is very fair,
A dwelling meet for Eden's heir"—
Flowing like honey from her tongue,
'Twas thus the syllables were sung—
"And true, that there is wanting there
A something yet: What can it be?
Is it not this?—look up, and see!"

IX.

First, heavenward, with refulgent smile,
She glanced, then earthward turn'd the while ;
From out her lap, she scatter'd round
Its riches of all scents and hues—
Scarlets and saffrons, pinks and blues ;
And sow'd with living gems the ground.
The rose to eastern plains she gave ;
The lily to the western wave ;
The violet to the south ; and forth
The thistle to the hardy north :
Then, in triumphant ecstasy,
Glancing across wide earth her eye,
She flung abroad her arms in air,
And daisies sprang up everywhere.

X.

"And let these be"—than song of birds
Harmonious more, 'twas thus her words
Prolong'd their sweetness—"let these be
For symbols and for signs to Thee,
Forthcoming Man, for whom was made
This varied world of sun and shade :
Fair in its hills and valleys, fair
In groves, and glades, and forest bowers,
The Genii of the earth and air
Have lavish'd their best offerings there ;
And mine I now have brought him—FLOWERS !

These, these are mine especial care;
And I have given them form and hue,
For ornament and emblem too:
Let them be symbols to the sense,
(For they are passionless and pure,
And sinless quite,) that innocence
Alone can happiness secure.
Nursed by the sunshine and the shower,
Buds grow to blossoms on the eye,
And having pass'd their destined hour,
Vanish away all painlessly—
For sorrowing days and sleepless nights
Are only Sin's dread perquisites—
As each returning spring fresh races,
Alike in beauty and in bloom,
Shall rise to occupy their places,
And shed on every breeze perfume.

XI.

"Then let them teach him—Faith. They grow,
But how and wherefore never know:—
The morning bathes them with its dew,
When fades in heaven its latest star;
The sunshine gives them lustre new,
And shows to noon each varied hue,
Than Fancy's dreams more beauteous far;
And night maternal muffles up
In her embrace each tender cup.
They toil not, neither do they spin,

And yet so exquisite their bloom,
Nor mimic Art, nor Tyrian loom
Shall e'er to their perfection win.
For million millions though they be,
And like to each, the searcher not
From out the whole one pair shall see
Identical in stripe and spot.

XII.

"To Spring these gifts," the Angel said,
"I give;"—and from her cestus she,
Forth to the Zephyrs liberally,
A sparkling handful scattered
Of seeds, like golden dust that fell
On mountain-side, and plain, and dell.
Hence sprang that earliest drop, whose hue
Is taintless as the new-fall'n snows;
The crocus, yellow-striped and blue;
The daffodil, and rathe primrose;
The colts-foot, with its leaflets white;
The cyclamen and aconite;
The violet's purpureal gem;
The golden star of Bethlehem;
Auriculus; narcissi bent,
As 'twere in worship o'er the stream;
Anemones, in languishment,
As just awakening from a dream;
And myriads not less sweet or bright,
Dusky as jet, or red as flames,

That glorify the day and night,
Unending, with a thousand names.

XIII.

"My vows are thus to Summer paid,"
She added, as she shower'd abroad,
O'er mount and mead, o'er glen and glade,
A sleet-like dust, which, o'er the ground
In countless atoms falling round,
Like rubies, pearls, and sapphires glow'd:
The pansy, and the fleur-de-lis,
Straightway arose in bloom; sweet pea,
The marigold of aureate hue,
The periwinkles white and blue,
The heliotrope afar to shine,
The cistus and the columbine,
The lily of the vale: and queen
Of all the bright red rose was seen
Matchless in majesty and mien.
Around were over-arching bowers,
Of lilac and laburnum, wove
With jasmine; and the undergrove
Glow'd bright with rhododendron flowers.

XIV.

"Nor shalt thou, Autumn"—thus her words
Found ending—"Nor shalt thou be left,
With thy blue skies and singing birds,
Of favours, all thine own, bereft;

The foxglove, with its stately bells
Of purple, shall adorn thy dells;
The wallflower, on each rifted rock,
From liberal blossoms shall breathe down,
(Gold blossoms frecked with iron-brown,)
Its fragrance; while the holly-hock,
The pink, and the carnation vie
With lupin, and with lavender,
To decorate the fading year;
And larkspurs, many-hued, shall drive
Gloom from the groves, where red leaves lie,
And Nature seems but half alive.

XV.

"No! never quite shall disappear
The glory of the circling year;—
Fade shall it never quite, if flowers
An emblem of existence be;
The golden rod shall flourish free,
And laurestini shall weave bowers
For Winter; while the Christmas rose
Shall blossom, though it be 'mid snows.

XVI.

"Meanings profounder, loftier lie
In all we see, in all we hear,
Than merely strike the common eye,
Than merely meet the careless ear;

And meekly Man must bend his knee
On Nature's temple-floor, if he
Would master her philosophy.—
It is not given alone to flowers
To brighten with their hue the hours;
But with a silence all sublime,
They chronicle the march of Time,
As month on month, in transience fast,
Commingles with the spectral past.
Some shall endure for seasons; they
Shall blossom on the breath of Spring;
Shall bourgeon gloriously the blue,
Refulgent, sunny Summer through;
And only shall the feebler ray
Of Autumn find them withering:
Others shall with the crescent Moon
Grow up in pride, to fade as soon:
Yea! not a few shall with the day
That saw them burst to bloom—decay;
Even like the babe, that opes its eye
To light, and seems but born to die.

XVII.

"By hieroglyphic hue and sign,
Flowers shall the heart and soul divine,
And all the feelings that engage
Man's restless thoughts from youth to age:
This blossom shall note infancy,
Lifting in earliest spring its eye

To dewy dawn, and drinking thence
The purity of innocence;
That—vigorous youth, which from the hue
Of summer skies, imbibes its blue,
And bursts abroad, as if to say
'Can lusty strength like mine decay?'
This—Life's autumnal date, which takes
A colouring from the breeze which shakes
The yellowing woods; and that—old age,
Which comes when Winter drifts the fields
With snow, and, prostrate to his rage
Tyrannical, bows down and yields.

XVIII.

"Yea! all the passions that impart
Their varied workings to the heart,
That stir to hate or calm to love,
That glory or debasement prove,
In flowers are imaged:—O! discern
In them recondite homilies; learn
The silent lessons which they teach;
For clearer vision shall explain,
Hereafter, what pertains to each,
And that nought made was made in vain!"

XIX.

As melts in music, far aloof,
Amid the chancel's galleried roof,
The organ's latest tone; as dies
The glorious rainbow, ray by ray,

Leaving no trace on the blue skies,
So sank that voice, that form away.

* * * * *

XX.

And what of the bewilder'd Poet,
On whom had fallen this flowery vision?
Cruel it seems, yet Truth must show it,—
He started from his dream Elysian;
But if 'twas at an Angel's calling,
Sure 'twas a fallen one; his eyes
And ears were shut from Paradise,
To listen—to the watchman bawling!

RHODOCLEA'S GARLAND.

I.

THIS garland of fair flowers, by me
Fondly wreathed, I send to thee,
Rhodoclea!
Lily, and love-cup are there,
Anemone with dewy hair,
Freshest violets dark-blue,
And the moist narcissus too,
Rhodoclea!

II.

Being crown'd with these, aside
Cast all vain, unmeaning pride,
Rhodoclea!
Cast vainglorious pride away;
Alike the pageants of a day,
Thou dost cease, and so do they,
Rhodoclea!

THE EGLANTINE.

The sun was setting in the summer west
With golden glory, 'mid pavilions vast
Of purple and gold; scarcely a zephyr breathed;
The woods in their umbrageous beauty slept;
The river with a soft sound murmured on;
Sweetly the wild birds sang; and far away
The azure-shouldered mountains, softly lined,
Seemed like the boundaries of Paradise.

Soft fell the eve: my wanderings led me on
To a lone river bank of yellow sand,—
The loved haunt of the ousel, whose blithe wing
Wanton'd from stone to stone,—and, on a mound

Of verdurous turf with wild-flowers diamonded,
(Harebell and lychnis, thyme and camomile,)
Sprang in the majesty of natural pride
An Eglantine—the red rose of the wood—
Its cany boughs with threatening prickles arm'd,
Rich in its blossoms and sweet-scented leaves.

The wild-rose has a nameless spell for me;
And never on the road-side do mine eyes
Behold it, but at once my thoughts revert
To schoolboy days: why so, I scarcely know;
Except that once, while wandering with my mates,
One gorgeous afternoon, when holiday
To Nature lent new charms, a thunder-storm
O'ertook us, cloud on cloud—a mass of black,
Dashing at once the blue sky from our view,
And spreading o'er the dim and dreary hills
A lurid mantle. To a leafy screen
We fled, of elms; and from the rushing rain
And hail found shelter, though at every flash
Of the red lightning, brightly heralding
The thunder-peal, within each bosom died
The young heart, and the day of doom seemed come.

At length the rent battalia cleared away—
The tempest-cloven clouds; and sudden fell
A streak of joyful sunshine. On a bush
Of wild-rose fell its beauty. All was dark
Around it still, and dismal; but the beam

(Like Hope sent down to re-illume Despair)
Burned on the bush, displaying every leaf,
And bud, and blossom, with such perfect light
And exquisite splendour, that since then my heart
Hath deemed it Nature's favourite, and mine eyes
Fall on it never, but that thought recurs,
And memories of the by-past, sad and sweet.

THE WHITE ROSE.

I.

Rose of the desert! thou art to me
An emblem of stainless purity,—
Of those who, keeping their garments white,
Walk on through life with steps aright.

II.

Thy fragrance breathes of the fields above,
Whose soil and air are faith and love;
And where, by the murmur of silver springs,
The Cherubim fold their snow-white wings;—

III.

Where those who were severed re-meet in joy,
Which death can never more destroy ;
Where scenes without, and where souls within,
Are blanched from taint and touch of sin ;—

IV.

Where speech is music, and breath is balm ;
And broods an everlasting calm ;
And flowers wither not, as in worlds like this ;
And hope is swallowed in perfect bliss ;—

V.

Where all is peaceful, for all is pure ;
And all is lovely, and all endure ;
And day is endless and ever bright ;
And no more sea is, and no more night ;—

VI.

Where round the Throne, in hues like thine,
The raiments of the ransom'd shine ;
And o'er each brow a halo glows
Of glory, like the pure White Rose !

LILIES.

WRITTEN UNDER A DRAWING OF A BUNCH OF THESE FLOWERS IN THE ALBUM OF THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LADY C—— C——.

I.

"Look to the lilies how they grow!"
'Twas thus the Saviour said, that we,
Even in the simplest flowers that blow,
God's ever-watchful care might see.

II.

Yes! nought escapes the guardian eye
Of Him, who marks the sparrow's fall,
Of Him, who lists the raven's cry—
However vast, however small.

III.

Then mourn not we for those we love,
As if all hope were reft away,
Nor let our sorrowing hearts refuse
Submission to His will to pay.

IV.

Shall He, who paints the lily's leaf,
Who gives the rose its scented breath,
Love all His works except the chief,
And leave His image, Man, to death?

V.

No! other hearts and hopes be ours,
And to our souls let faith be given
To think our lost friends only flowers
Transplanted from this world to Heaven.

THE HAREBELL.

SIMPLEST of blossoms! to mine eye
Thou bring'st the summer's painted sky;
The maythorn greening in the nook;
The minnows sporting in the brook;
The bleat of flocks; the breath of flowers;
The song of birds amid the bowers;
The crystal of the azure seas;
The music of the southern breeze;
And, over all, the blessed sun,
Telling of halcyon days begun.

Blue-bell of Scotland, to my gaze,
As wanders Memory through the maze
Of silent, half-forgotten things,
A thousand sweet imaginings
Thou conjurest up—again return
Emotions in my heart to burn,
Which have been long estranged; the sky
Brightens upon my languid eye;
And, for a while, the world I see,
As when my heart first turned to thee,
Lifting thy cup, a lucid gem,
Upon its slender emerald stem.
Again I feel a careless boy,
Roaming the daisied wold in joy;
At noontide, tracking in delight
The butterfly's erratic flight;
Or watching, 'neath the evening star,
The moonrise brightening from afar,
As boomed the beetle o'er the ground,
And shrieked the bat lone flitting round.

Yet though it be, that now thou art
But as a memory to my heart,
Though years have flown, and, in their flight,
Turned hope to sadness, bloom to blight,
And I am changed, yet thou art still
The same bright blossom of the hill,
Catching within thy cup of blue
The summer light and evening dew.

Yes ! though the wizard Time hath wrought
Strange alteration in my lot,
Though what unto my youthful sight
Appeared most beautiful and bright—
(The morning star, the silver dew,
Heaven's circling arch of cloudless blue,
And setting suns, above the head
Of ragged mountains blazing red)—
Have of their glory lost a part,
As worldly thoughts o'erran the heart ;
Still, what of yore thou wert to me,
Blithe Boyhood seeks and finds in thee.
As on the sward reclined he lies,
Shading the sunshine from his eyes,
He sees the lark, with twinkling wings,
For ever soaring as she sings,
And listens to the tiny rill,
Amid its hazels murmuring still,
The while thou bloomest by his knee—
Ah ! who more blest on earth than he !

Ah ! when in hours by thought o'ercast,
We mete the present with the past,
Seems not this life so full of change,
That we have to ourselves grown strange ?
For, differs less the noon from night,
Than what we be from what we might.
The feelings all have known decay ;
Our youthful friendships, where are they ?

The glories of the earth and sky
Less touch the heart, less charm the eye;
Yet, as if Nature would not part,
In silent beauty to my heart,
Sweet floweret of the pastoral glen,
Amid the stir, the strife of men,
Thou speakest of all gentle things,
Of bees, and birds, and gushing springs,
The azure lake, the mossy fount,
The plaided shepherd on the mount,
The silence of the vale profound,
And flocks in quiet feeding round!

THE WALL-FLOWER.

I.

The Wall-flower—the Wall-flower,
How beautiful it blooms!
It gleams above the ruined tower,
Like sunlight over tombs;
It sheds a halo of repose
Around the wrecks of time.
To beauty give the flaunting rose,
The Wall-flower is sublime.

II.

Flower of the solitary place!
Grey ruin's golden crown,
That lendest melancholy grace
To haunts of old renown;
Thou mantlest o'er the battlement,
By strife or storm decayed;
And fillest up each envious rent
Time's canker-tooth hath made.

III.

Thy roots outspread the ramparts o'er,
Where, in war's stormy day,
Percy or Douglas ranged of yore
Their ranks in grim array;
The clangour of the field is fled,
The beacon on the hill
No more through midnight blazes red,
But thou art blooming still!

IV.

Whither hath fled the choral band
That fill'd the Abbey's nave?
Yon dark sepulchral yew-trees stand
O'er many a level grave.
In the belfry's crevices, the dove
Her young brood nurseth well,
While thou, lone flower! dost shed above
A sweet decaying smell.

V.

In the season of the tulip-cup,
When blossoms clothe the trees,
How sweet to throw the lattice up,
And scent thee on the breeze;
The butterfly is then abroad,
The bee is on the wing,
And on the hawthorn by the road
The linnets sit and sing.

VI.

Sweet Wall-flower—sweet Wall-flower!
Thou conjurest up to me
Full many a soft and sunny hour
Of boyhood's thoughtless glee;
When joy from out the daisies grew,
In woodland pastures green,
And summer skies were far more blue,
Than since they e'er have been.

VII.

Now autumn's pensive voice is heard
Amid the yellow bowers,
The robin is the regal bird,
And thou the queen of flowers;
He sings on the laburnum trees,
Amid the twilight dim,
And Araby ne'er gave the breeze
Such scents, as thou to him.

VIII.

Rich is the pink, the lily gay,
The rose is summer's guest;
Bland are thy charms when these decay,
Of flowers—first, last, and best!
There may be gaudier in the bower,
And statelier on the tree;
But Wall-flower—loved Wall-flower,
Thou art the flower for me!

THE DAISY.

I.

THE Daisy blossoms on the rocks,
Amid the purple heath;
It blossoms on the river's banks,
That thrids the glens beneath:
The eagle, at his pride of place,
Beholds it by his nest;
And, in the mead, it cushions soft
The lark's descending breast.

II.

Before the cuckoo, earliest spring
Its silver circlet knows,
When greening buds begin to swell,
And zephyr melts the snows;
And when December's breezes howl
Along the moorlands bare,
And only blooms the Christmas rose,
The Daisy still is there!

III.

Samaritan of flowers! to it
All races are alike,—
The Switzer on his glacier height,
The Dutchman by his Dyke,
The seal-skin vested Esquimaux,
Begirt with icy seas,
And, underneath his burning noon,
The parasol'd Chinese.

IV.

The emigrant on distant shore,
'Mid scenes and faces strange,
Beholds it flowering in the sward,
Where'er his footsteps range;
And when his yearning, home-sick heart
Would bow to its despair,
It reads his eye a lesson sage,
That God is everywhere!

v.

Stars are the Daisies that begem
The blue fields of the sky,
Beheld by all, and everywhere,
Bright prototypes on high :—
Bloom on, then, unpretending flower !
And to the waverer be
An emblem of St Paul's content,
St Stephen's constancy.

THE SWEET-BRIAR.

I.

The Sweet-briar flowering,
With boughs embowering,
Beside the willow-tufted stream,
In its soft red bloom,
And its wild perfume,
Brings back the past like a sunny dream !

II.

Methinks, in childhood,
Beside the wildwood
I lie, and listen the blackbird's song,

'Mid the evening calm,
As the Sweet-briar's balm
On the gentle west wind breathes along—

III.

To speak of meadows,
And palm-tree shadows,
And bee-hive cones, and a thymy hill,
And greenwood mazes,
And greensward daisies,
And a foamy stream, and a clacking mill.

IV.

Still the heart rejoices
At the happy voices
Of children, singing amid their play;
While swallows twittering,
And waters glittering,
Make earth an Eden at close of day.

V.

In sequestered places,
Departed faces,
Return and smile as of yore they smiled;
When, with trifles blest,
Each buoyant breast
Held the trusting heart of a little child.

POEMS

SUGGESTED BY

CELEBRATED SCOTTISH LOCALITIES.

THE TOWER OF ERCILDOUNE.

Quilum spak Thomas
O' Erryldoune, that sayd in Derne,
Thare suld melt stalwartly, starke and sterne.
He sayd it in his prophecy;
But how he wyst it was ferly.
WYNTON'S CRONYKIL.

I.

THERE is a stillness on the night;
Glimmers the ghastly moonshine white
On Learmonth's woods, and Leader's streams,
Till Earth looks like a land of dreams:
Up in the arch of heaven afar,
Receded looks each little star,
And meteor flashes faintly play
By fits along the Milky Way.
Upon me in this eerie hush,
A thousand wild emotions rush,
As, gazing spell-bound o'er the scene,
Beside thy haunted walls I lean,
Grey Ercildoune, and feel the Past
His charmëd mantle o'er me cast;

Visions, and thoughts unknown to Day,
Bear o'er the fancy wizard sway,
And call up the traditions told
Of him who sojourned here of old.

II.

What stirs within thee? 'Tis the owl
Nursing amid thy chambers foul
Her impish brood; the nettles rank
Are seeding on thy wild-flower bank;
The hemlock and the dock declare
In rankness dark their mastery there;
And all around thee speaks the sway
Of desolation and decay.
In outlines dark the shadows fall
Of each grotesque and crumbling wall.
Extinguished long hath been the strife
Within thy courts of human life.
The rustic, with averted eye,
At fall of evening hurries by,
And lists to hear, and thinks he hears,
Strange sounds—the offspring of his fears;
And wave of bough, and waters' gleam,
Not what they are, but what they seem
To be, are by the mind believed,
Which seeks not to be undeceived.
Thou scowlest like a spectre vast
Of silent generations past,
And all about thee wears a gloom
Of something sterner than the tomb.[1]

For thee, 'tis said, dire forms molest,
That cannot die, or will not rest.[2]

III.

Backward my spirit to the sway
Of shadowy Eld is led away,
When, underneath thine ample dome,
Thomas the Rhymer made his home,
The wondrous poet-seer, whose name,
Still floating on the breath of fame,
Hath overpast five hundred years,
Yet fresh as yesterday appears,
With spells to arm the winter's tale,
And make the listener's cheek grow pale.
Secluded here in chamber lone,
Often the light of genius shone
Upon his pictured page, which told
Of Tristrem brave, and fair Isolde,[3]
And how their faith was sorely tried,
And how they would not change, but died
Together, and the fatal stroke
Which stilled one heart, the other broke;
And here, on midnight couch reclined,
Hearkened his gifted ear the wind
Of dark Futurity, as on
Through shadowy ages swept the tone,
A mystic voice, whose murmurs told
The acts of eras yet unrolled;
While Leader sang a low wild tune,
And redly set the waning moon,

Amid the West's pavilion grim,
O'er Soltra's mountains vast and dim.

IV.

His mantle dark, his bosom bare,
His floating eyes and flowing hair,
Methinks the visioned bard I see
Beneath the mystic Eildon Tree,[4]
Piercing the mazy depths of Time,
And weaving thence prophetic rhyme;
Beings around him that had birth
Neither in Heaven, nor yet on earth;
And at his feet the broken law
Of Nature, through whose chinks he saw.

V.

The Eildon Tree hath passed away
By natural process of decay;
We search around, and see it not,
Though yet a grey stone marks the spot
Where erst its boughs, with quivering fear,
O'erarched the sprite-attended seer,
Holding unhallowed colloquy
On things to come and things gone by.
And still the Goblin Burn steals round
The purple heath with lonely sound,[5]
As when its waters stilled their noise
To listen to the silver voice,

Which sang in wild prophetic strains,
Of Scotland's perils and her pains—
Of dire defeat on Flodden Hill—
Of Pinkyncleuch's blood-crimsoned rill—
Of coming woes, of lowering wars,
Of endless battles, broils, and jars—
Till France's Queen should bear a son
To make two rival kingdoms one,
And many a wound of many a field
Of blood, in Bruce's blood be healed.[6]

VI.

Where gained the man this wondrous dower
Of song and superhuman power?
Tradition answers,—Elfland's Queen
Beheld the boy-bard on the green,[7]
Nursing pure thoughts and feelings high
With Poesy's abstracted eye;
Bewitched him with her sibyl charms,
Her tempting lips, and wreathing arms,
And lured him from the earth away
Into the light of milder day.
They passed through deserts wide and wild,
Whence living things were far exiled,
Shadows and clouds, and silence drear,
And shapes and images of fear;
Until they reached the land, where run
Rivers of blood, and shines no sun
By day—no moon, no star by night—

But glows a fair, a fadeless light—
The realm of Faëry.
There he dwelt,
Till seven sweet years had o'er him stealt—
A long, deep, rapturous trance, 'mid bowers
O'er-blossomed with perennial flowers—
One deep dream of ecstatic joy,
Unmeasured, and without alloy;
And when by Learmonth's turrets grey,
Which long had mourned their lord's delay,
Again 'mid summer's twilight seen,
His velvet shoon were Elfin green,
The livery of the tiny train
Who held him, and would have again.

VII.

Smil'st thou at this, prosaic age,
Whom seldom other thoughts engage
Than those of pitiable self,
The talismans of power and pelf—
Whose only dream is Bentham's dream,
And Poetry is choked by steam?
It must be so; but yet to him
Who loves to roam 'mid relics dim
Of ages, whose existence seems
Less like reality than dreams—
A raptured, an ecstatic trance,
A gorgeous vision of romance—
It yields a wildly pleasing joy,
To feel in soul once more a boy,

And breathe, even while we know us here,
Love's soft Elysian atmosphere ;
To leave the rugged paths of Truth
For fancies that illumined youth,
And throw Enchantment's colours o'er
The forest dim, the ruin hoar,
The walks where musing Genius strayed,
The spot where Faith life's forfeit paid,
The dungeon where the patriot lay,
The cairn that marks the warrior's clay,
The rosiers twain that shed their bloom
In autumn o'er the lover's tomb ;
For sure such scenes, if truth be found
In what we feel, are hallowed ground.

VIII.

Airy delusion this may be,
But ever such remain for me :
Still may the earth with beauty glow
Beneath the storm's illumined bow—
God's promised sign—and be my mind
To science, when it deadens, blind ;[8]
For mental light could ne'er be given
Except to lead us nearer Heaven.

THE GLEN OF ROSLIN.

I.

HARK! 'twas the trumpet rung!
  Commingling armies shout;
And echoing far yon woods among,
  The ravage and the rout!
The voice of triumph and of wail,
  Of victor and of vanquish'd blent,[9]
Is wafted on the vernal gale:
  A thousand bows are bent,
And, 'mid the hosts that throng the vale,
  A shower of arrows sent.

II.

For Saxon foes invade
  The Baliol's kingless realm:
Their myriads swarm in yonder shade,
  The weak to overwhelm:—
'Tis Seagrave, on destruction bent,
  From Freedom's roll to blot the land,

By England's haughty Edward sent ;[10]
But never on her mountain strand
Shall Caledonia sit content—
Content with fetter'd hand.

III.

Not while one patriot breathes—
Not while each broomy vale
And cavern'd cliff bequeaths
Some old heroic tale !
The Wallace and the Græme have thrown
The lustre of their deeds behind,[11]
The children to their fathers' own
Unconquer'd straths to bind ;
By every hearth their tale is known,
In every heart enshrined.

IV.

The Comyn lets not home
To tell a bloodless tale,
And forth in arms with Frazer come
The chiefs of Teviotdale.
In Roslin's wild and wooded glen
The clash of swords the shepherd hears,
And from the groves of Hawthornden
Gleam forth ten thousand spears :
For Scottish mothers bring forth men [12]
Of might, that mock at fears !

v.

Three camps divided raise
Their snowy tops on high ;
The breeze-unfurling flag displays
Its lions to the sky :
While chants the mountain lark in air
Its matin carols of delight,
The tongue of mirth is jocund there ;
Nor is it dreamt, ere night,
The sun shall shed its golden glare
On thousands slain in fight !

VI.

Baffled, and backward borne,
Is England's foremost war ;
The Saxon battle-god, forlorn,
Remounts his raven car.
'Tis vain—a third time Victory's cheer
Bursts forth from that resistless foe,
Who, headlong, on their fierce career,
Like mountain torrents go :
The invaders are dispersed like deer,
And whither none may know !

VII.

Three triumphs in a day !
Three hosts subdued by one !
Three armies scattered, like the spray,
Beneath one vernal sun !

Who, pausing 'mid this solitude
Of rocky streams, o'erhung with trees,
Where rears the cushat-dove its brood,
And foxglove lures the bees,
Could think that men had shed the blood
Of man in haunts like these!

VIII.

A dream—a nightmare dream
Of shadowy ages gone,
When daylight wore a demon gleam,
And fact like fiction shone:
A dream!—and it hath left no power
To blast these beauteous scenes around,[13]
Which look as if a halcyon bower
All gentlest things had found
Here, in this paradise, where flower,
And tree, and bird abound.

IX.

Yes! the great Mother still
Claims Roslin for her own,
And Summer, girt with rock and rill,
Here mounts a chosen throne:
Blue Esk to Gorton's listening woods
Is meekly murmuring all day long,
And birds for sheltering solitudes
Pay tributary song:
Check'd be each step that here intrudes
To offer Nature wrong.

X.

St Clair! thy princely halls
In ruin sink decay'd,[15]
And moss now greens the chapel walls
Where thy proud line is laid!—
What sees the stranger musing here,
Where mail-clad men no longer dwell?
A bleach-field spreads its whiteness near,
And smoke-wreaths round the dell
Show whence the Christian worshipper
Obeys the Sabbath bell.

XI.

Thus let it ever be!
Let human discord cease,
And earth the blest millennium see
Of purity and peace!
Die sin away—as dies the mist
Before the cleansing sunrise borne—
And Pity, vainly watchful, list
For Misery's moan forlorn!
Bright be each eve as amethyst,
As opal pure each morn!

THE TOMB OF DE BRUCE.

A Freedome is a noble thing:
Freedome makes man to have liking:
Freedome all solace to men gives:
He lives at ease that freely lives.

BARBOUR.

I.

And liest thou, great Monarch, this pavement below?
Thou who wert in war like a rock to the ocean,
Like a star in the battle-field's stormy commotion,
Like a barrier of steel to the bursts of the foe!
All lofty thy boast, grey Dunfermline, may be,
That the bones of King Robert, the hero whose story,
'Mid our history's night, is a day-track of glory,
Find an honour'd and holy asylum in thee:
And here, till the world is eclips'd in decline,
Thy chosen ones, Scotland, shall kneel at this shrine.

II.

On Luxury's hot-bed thou sprang'st not to man—
From childhood Adversity's storms howl'd around thee;
And fain with his shackles had Tyranny bound thee,
When, lo! he beheld thee in Liberty's van!

To the dust down the Thistle of Scotland was trod ;
'Twas wreck and 'twas ruin, 'twas discord and danger ;
O'er her strongholds waved proudly the flag of the stranger ;
Till thy sword, like the lightning, flashed courage abroad ;
And the craven, that slept with his head on his hand,
Started up at thy war-shout, and belted his brand !

III.

How long Treason's pitfalls 'twas thine to avoid,—
Was the wild-fowl thy food, and thy beverage the fountain,
Was thy pillow the heath, and thy home on the mountain,
When that hope was cast down, which could not be destroy'd !
As the wayfarer longs for the dawning of morn,
So wearied thy soul for thy Country's awaking,
Unsheathing her terrible broadsword, and shaking
The fetters away, which in drowse she had worn :
At thy call she arous'd her to fight ; and, in fear,
Invasion's fang'd bloodhounds were scatter'd like deer.

IV.

The broadsword and battle-axe gleam'd at thy call ;
From the strath and the corrie, the cottage and palace,
Pour'd forth like a tide the avengers of Wallace,
To rescue their Scotland from rapine and thrall :

How glow'd the gaunt cheeks, long all careworn and pale,
As the recreant brave, to their duty returning,
In the eye of King Robert saw liberty burning,
And raised his wild gathering-cry forth on the gale!
O, then was the hour for a patriot to feel,
As he buckled his cuirass, the edge of his steel!

V.

When thou cam'st to the field all was ruin and woe;
'Twas dastardly terror or jealous distrusting;
In the hall hung the target and burgonet rusting;
The brave were dispersed, and triumphant the foe:—
But from chaos thy sceptre call'd order and awe—
'Twas Security's homestead; all flourish'd that near'd thee;
The worthy upheld, and the turbulent fear'd thee,
For thy pillars of strength were Religion and Law:
The meanest in thee a Protector could find—
Thou wert feet to the cripple, and eyes to the blind.

VI.

O, ne'er shall the fame of the patriot decay—
De Bruce! in thy name still our country rejoices;
It thrills Scottish heart-strings, it swells Scottish voices,
As it did when the Bannock ran red from the fray.
Thine ashes in darkness and silence may lie;
But ne'er, mighty hero, while earth hath its motion,
While rises the day-star, or rolls forth the ocean,
Can thy deeds be eclipsed or their memory die:
They stand thy proud monument, sculptur'd sublime
By the chisel of Fame on the Tablet of Time.

FLODDEN FIELD.

We'll hear nae mair lilting, at the ewe-milking:
Women and bairns are heartless and wae:
Sighing and moaning on ilka green loaning—
The flowers of the forest are a' wede away.

SCOTTISH BALLAD.

I.

'Twas on a sultry summer noon,
The sky was blue, the breeze was still,
And Nature with the robes of June
Had clothed the slopes of Flodden hill;
As rode we slowly o'er the plain,
'Mid way-side flowers and sprouting grain,
The leaves on every bough seemed sleeping,
And wild bees murmured in their mirth
So pleasantly, it seemed as Earth
A jubilee were keeping.

II.

And canst thou be, unto my soul
I said, that dread Northumbrian field,
Where War's terrific thunder-roll
Above two banded kingdoms pealed?

From out the forest of his spears
Ardent imagination hears
The crash of Surrey's onward charging ;[17]
While curtal-axe and broadsword gleam
Opposed a bright, wide, coming stream,
Like Solway's tide enlarging.[18]

III.

Hark to the turmoil and the shout,
The war-cry and the cannon's boom !
Behold the struggle and the rout,
The broken lance and draggled plume !
Borne to the earth with deadly force,
Down come the horseman and his horse ;
Round boils the battle like an ocean,
While stripling blithe, and veteran stern,
Pour forth their life-blood on the fern,
Amid its fierce commotion !

IV.

Mown down, like swathes of summer flowers,
Yes ! on the cold earth there they lie,
The lords of Scotland's banner'd towers,[19]
The chosen of her chivalry !
Commingled with the vulgar dead,
Profane lies many a sacred head ;
And thou, the vanguard onward leading,
Who left the sceptre for the sword,
For battle-field the festal board,
Liest low amid the bleeding !

v.

Yes! here thy life-star knew decline,
Though hope, that strove to be deceived,
Shaped thy fair course to Palestine,
And what it wished, full long believed:—[20]
An unhewn pillar on the plain
Marks out the spot where thou wast slain:
There pondering as I stood, and gazing,
From its grey top the linnet sang,
And, o'er the slopes where conflict rang,
The quiet sheep were grazing.

VI.

And were the nameless dead unsung,
The patriot and the peasant train,
Who like a phalanx round thee clung,[21]
To find but death on Flodden plain?
No! many a mother's melting lay
Mourned o'er the bright flowers wede away;[22]
And many a maid, with tears of sorrow,
Whose locks no more were seen to wave,
Pined for the beauteous and the brave,
Who came not on the morrow!

VII.

From northern Thule to the Tweed
Was heard the wail, and felt the shock;
And o'er the mount, and through the mead,
Untended, wandered many a flock;

In many a creek, on many a shore,
Lay tattered sail and rotting oar;
And, from the castle to the dwelling
Of the rude hind, a common grief,
In one low wail that sought relief,
From Scotland's heart came swelling!

THE FIELD OF PINKIE.

WRITTEN ON THE TRI-CENTENARY OF THE BATTLE, SEPT. 10, 1847

I.

A LOVELY eve! as loath to quit a scene
So beautiful, the parting sun smiles back
From western Pentland's summits, all between
Bearing the impress of his glorious track;
His last, long, level ray fond Earth retains;
The Forth a sheet of gold from shore to shore;
Gold on the Esk, and on the ripened plains,
And on the boughs of yon broad sycamore.

II.

Long shadows fall from turret and from tree;
Homeward the labourer thro' the radiance goes;
Calmly the mew floats downward to the sea;
And inland flock the rooks to their repose:
Over the ancient farmstead wreathes the smoke,
Melting in silence 'mid the pure blue sky;
And sings the blackbird, cloistered in the oak,
His anthem to the eve, how solemnly!

III.

On this green hill—yon grove—the placid flow
Of Esk—and on the Links that skirt the town—
How differently, three hundred years ago,
The same sun o'er this self-same spot went down!
Instead of harvest wealth, the gory dead
In many a mangled heap lay scattered round;
Where all is tranquil, anguish reigned and dread,
And for the blackbird wailed the bugle's sound.

IV.

Mirror'd by fancy's power, my sight before
The past revives with panoramic glow;
Scotland resumes the cold rough front of yore,
And England, now her sister, scowls her foe:
Two mighty armaments, for conflict met,
Darken the hollows and the heights afar—
Horse, cannon, standard, spear, and burgonet,
The leaders, and the legions, mad for war.[23]

V.

Shrilly uprises Warwick's battle-cry,
As from Falsyde his glittering columns wheel;
Hark to the rasp of Grey's fierce cavalry
Against the bristling hedge of Scotland's steel!
As bursts the billow foaming on the rock,
That onset is repelled, that charge is met;
Flaunting, the banner'd thistle braves the shock,
And backward bears the might of Somerset.

VI.

Horseman and horse, dash'd backwards without hope,
Vainly that wall of serried steel oppose.[24]
But now the musketeers rush down the slope,
And thrice five hundred archers twang their bows.
The iron shower descends—they reel—they turn—
Doth Arran flinch! can Douglas but deplore?
Hushed are the cheers that rang thro' Otterburn,
Blunted the blades that crimson'd Ancrum-Moor![25]

VII.

They bend—they break—they flee—a panic rout
Ensues; with dying and with dead the plain
Is cumber'd; England whoops her victor shout,
And Scotland's bravest fight, to fall in vain.
And Esk from Roslin famed, and Hawthornden,
Gliding in peace by rock and spreading tree,
Checked by the mass of horses and of men,
Dashed o'er them red and reeking to the sea.

VIII.

A fearful day was that! since Flodden's day,
Like storm of blood hath darkened not the north;
By thousands sword and shield were thrown away,
Up on the hills, and down beside the Forth:
Through Musselburg, and past St Michael's fane,
Westward the ravage and the rout was sped;
And, thick as cattle pasture on a plain,
Lay round Loretto's hermitage the dead.[26]

IX.

And thou, sweet burn of Pinkie, darkly clear,
Wimpling where water-flags and wild-flowers weave,
'Tween hoof-indented banks, with slaughter drear,
Curdled with blood, beneath the shades of eve—[27]
Oh! from this scene how many a maiden fair
Looked—languished for her warrior-love in vain,
Till Beauty's roses, blighted by despair,
Paled on the cheeks that ne'er knew bloom again!

X.

And oh! the breaking hearts of widowed wife,
Of sire and sister, as with dirgeful moan,
Passing like whirlwind from that field of strife,
From shire to shire, the news went wailing on—
Went wailing on—and wrapped alike in woe
Cottage and castle—and, by every hearth,
Saddened the cheer—bade Woman's tears to flow,
And crushed the patriot's towering hopes to earth!

XI.

Three hundred years have passed—three centuries,
Even to the reckoning of a single night—
Where stood the hosts I stand: there Pinkie lies
Beneath, and yon is Falsyde on the height.
Victors and vanquished—where are either now
Who shone that day in plume and steel arrayed?
Ask of the white bones scattered by the plough—
Read in the sculptures on grey tombs decayed!

XII.

Sated with blood, and glad his prey to leave,
Five hours in hot pursuit and carnage spent,
In yon green clump, by Inveresk, at eve,
Proud Somerset, the victor, pitched his tent:
There, 'mid its circle grey of mossy stone,
A time-worn fleur-de-lis still marks the spot,[28]
Which else had to the searcher been unknown;
For of that field one other trace is not.

XIII.

Oh, Nature! when abroad we look at thee,
In beauty aye revolving, yet the same,
In sun, moon, stars, the air, the earth, the sea,
Of God's great universe the goodly frame,—
Why is it thus we set His laws at nought,
Eschew the truth, and crouch in Error's den,
Forgetting Him, that died and lives, who brought
The message—"Peace on earth, goodwill to men!"

XIV.

Speed Heaven the time, tho' distant still it be,
When each his pleasure shall in duty find,
When knowledge shall from prejudice set free,
Hearts throb to hearts, and mind respond to mind!
O! for the dawning of that purer day,
Only as yet to Aspiration given,
When clouds no more shall darken o'er our way,
And all shall walk in light—the light from Heaven!

HAWTHORNDEN.

Cum posuit Latiis Buchananum vincere Musis
Drummondus, patrio maluit ore loqui.
Major uter? Primas huic defert Scotia, vates
Vix inter Latios ille secundus erat.
ARTHUR JOHNSTON.

I.

STRANGER! gaze round thee on a woodland scene
Of fairy loveliness, all unsurpassed.
In gulfy amphitheatre, the boughs
Of many-foliaged stems engird thy path
With emerald gloom; the shelving, steepy banks,
With eglantine and hawthorn blossomed o'er,

And a flush undergrowth of primroses,
Lychnes, and daffodils, and harebells blue,
Of Summer's liberal bounty mutely tell.
From frowning rocks piled up precipitous,
With scanty footing topples the huge oak,
Tossing his arms abroad; and, fixed in clefts,
Where gleams at intervals a patch of sward,
The hazel throws his silvery branches down,
Fringing with grace the dark-brown battlements.
Look up, and lo! o'er all, yon castled cliff—
Its roof is lichened o'er, purple and green,
And blends its grey walls with coeval trees:
There "Jonson sate in Drummond's classic shade:"
The mazy stream beneath is Roslin's Esk—
And what thou lookest on is Hawthornden![29]

II.

Firm is the mansion's basement on the rock:
Beneath there yawns a many-chambered cave,
With dormitory, and hollow well, and rooms
Scooped by the hands of men.[30] From its slant mouth,
Bramble-o'ergrown, facing the river bed,
Thro' Scotland's troublous times, in days of Eld,
When Tyranny held rule, oft have the brave,
Who dared not show themselves in open day,
Seen the red sunset on yon high tree-tops,
As twilight with blue darkness filled the glen;
Or with lone taper, in its pitchy womb,
Biding their time, around Dalwolsey sate,
And mourned the rust that dimm'd each patriot sword

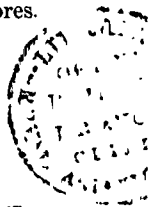
III.

Nor pass unmarked that bough-embosomed nook
Beside thee—in the rock a cool recess,
Christened immortally The Cypress Grove,[31]
By him who pondered there. 'Twas to that spot,
So sad, yet lovely in its solitude,
That Drummond, the historian and the bard,
The noble and enlightened, from the world
Withdrew to wisdom, and the holy lore,
At night, at noon, in tempest or in calm,
Which Nature teaches—for, a wounded deer,
Early he left the herd, and strayed alone:
While dreaming lovely dreams, in buoyant youth,
Even 'mid the splendours of unclouded noon,
Had fallen the sudden shadow on *his* heart,
That lived but in another—whom Death took,
Blighting his fond affections in their spring.[32]

IV.

Through years of calm and bright philosophy,
Making this Earth a type of Paradise,
He sojourned 'mid these lone and lovely scenes—
Lone, listening from afar the murmurous din
Of Life's loud bustle; as an eremite,
In sylvan haunt remote, when housed the bees,
And silent all except the nightingale,
Whom fitful song awakes, at eve may hear,
Dream-like, the boom of the far-distant sea:
And in that cave he strung and struck his lyre,

Waking such passionate tones to love and Heaven,
That from her favourite haunt, the sunny South,
From Arno and Vaucluse, the Muse took wing,
And fixed her dwelling-place on Celtic shores.



THE RUINS OF SETON CHAPEL.

Il y a des Comptes, des Roys, des Ducs; ainsi
C'est assez pour moy d'etre Seigneur De Seton.
MARIE D'ECOSSE.

I.

THE beautiful, the powerful, and the proud,
The many, and the mighty, yield to Time—
Time that, with noiseless pace and viewless wing,
Glides on and on—the despot of the world.

II.

With what a glory the refulgent sun,
Far, from the crimson portals of the west,
Sends back his parting radiance: round and round
Stupendous walls encompass me, and throw
The ebon outlines of their traceries down
Upon the dusty floor: the eastern piles
Receive the chequered shadows of the west,
In mimic lattice-work and sable hues.
Rich in its mellowness, the sunshine bathes

The sculptured epitaphs of barons dead
Long ere this breathing generation moved,
Or wantoned in the garish eye of noon.
The sad and sombre trophies of decay—
The prone effigies, carved in marble mail;[33]
The fair Ladye with cross'd palms on her breast;
The tablet grey with mimic roses bound;
The angled bones, the sand-glass, and the scythe,—
These, and the stone-carv'd cherubs that impend
With hovering wings, and eyes of fixedness,
Gleam down the ranges of the solemn aisle,
Dull 'mid the crimson of the waning light.

III.

This is a season and a scene to hold
Discourse, and purifying monologue,
Before the silent spirit of the Past!
Power built this house to Prayer[34]—'twas earthly power,
And vanished—see its sad mementoes round!
The gilly-flowers upon each fractured arch,
And from the time-worn crevices, look down,
Blooming where all is desolate. With tufts
Clustering and dark, and light-green trails between,
The ivy hangs perennial; yellow-flower'd,
The dandelion shoots its juicy stalks
Over the thin transparent blades of grass,
Which bend and flicker, even amid the calm;
And, oh! sad emblems of entire neglect,
In rank luxuriance, the nettles spread
Behind the massy tablatures of death,

Hanging their pointed leaves and seedy stalks
Above the graves, so lonesome and so low,
Of famous men, now utterly unknown,
Yet whose heroic deeds were, in their day,
The theme of loud acclaim—when Seton's arm
In power with Stuart and with Douglas vied. [35]
Clad in their robes of state, or graith of war,
A proud procession, o'er the stage of time,
As century on century wheeled away,
They passed; and, with the escutcheons mouldering o'er
The little spot, where voicelessly they sleep,
Their memories have decayed;—nay, even their bones
Are crumbled down to undistinguished dust,
Mocking the Herald, who, with pompous tones,
Would set their proud array of quarterings forth,
Down to the days of Chrystal and De Bruce.

IV.

What art Thou now, O pile of olden time?—
A visible memento that the works
Of men do like their masters pass away!
The grey and time-worn pillars, lichened o'er,
Throw from their fretted pedestals a line
Of sombre darkness far, and chequer o'er
The floor with shade and sunshine. Hoary walls!
Since first ye rose in architectural pride—
Since first ye frowned in majesty of strength—
Since first ye caught the crimson of the dawn
On oriel panes, on glittering lattices
Of many-coloured brightness—Time hath wrought

An awful revolution. Night and morn,
From the near road, the traveller heard arise
The hymn of gratulation and of praise,
Amid your ribbed arches: sandalled monks,
Whitened by eld, in alb and scapulaire,
With book and crosier, mass and solemn rite,
Frail, yet forgiving frailties, sojourn'd here,
When Rome was all-prevailing, and obtained—
Though Cæsars and though Ciceros were not
The rulers of her camps and cabinets—
A second empire o'er the minds of men.[30]

v.

What art Thou now, O pile of olden time?—
A symbol of antiquity—a shrine
By man deserted, and to silence left.
The sparrow chatters on thy buttresses
Throughout the livelong day, and sportively
The swallow twitters through thy vaulted roofs,
Fluttering the whiteness of its inner plumes
Through shade, and now emerging to the sun;
The night-owls are thy choristers, and whoop
Amid the silence of the dreary dark;
The twilight-loving bat, on leathern wing,
Finds out a crevice for her callow young
In some dilapidated nook, on high,
Beyond the unassisted reach of man;
And on the utmost pinnacles the rook
Finds airy dwelling-place and home secure.
When Winter with his tempests lowers around,

The whirling snow-flakes, through the open holes
Descending, gather on the tombs beneath,
And make the sad scene desolater still:
When sweeps the night-gale past on forceful wing,
And sighs through portals grey a solemn dirge,
As if in melancholy symphony,
The huge planes wail aloud, the alders creak,
The ivy rustles, and the hemlock bends
With locks of darkness to its very roots,
Springing from out the grassy mounds of those
Whose tombs are long since tenantless. But now,
With calm and quiet eye, the setting sun,
Back from the Grampians that engird the Forth,
Beams mellowness upon the wrecks around,
Tinges the broken arch with crimson rust,
Flames down the Gothic aisle, and mantles o'er
The tablatures of marble. Beautiful—
So bathed in nature's glorious smiles intense—
The ruined altar, the baptismal font,
The wallflower-crested pillars, foliage-bound,
The shafted oriel, and the ribbed roofs,
Labour, in years long past, of cunning hands!

VI.

Thy lords have passed away: their palace home,
Where princes oft at wine and wassail sate,[37]
Hath not a stone now on another left;
And scarcely can the curious eye trace out
Its strong foundations—though its giant arms,
Once, in their wide protecting amplitude,

Even like a parent's circled thee about.
Now Twilight mantles nature: silence reigns,
Save that, beneath, amid the danky vaults,
Is heard, with fitful melancholy sound,
The clammy dew-drop plashing: silence reigns,
Save that amid the gnarly sycamores,
That spread their huge embowering shades around,
From clear, melodious throat, the blackbird trills
His song—his almost homily to man—
Dirge-like, and sinking in the moody heart,
With tones prophetic. Through the trellis green,
The purpling hills look dusky; and the clouds,
Shorn of their edge-work of refulgent gold,
Spread, whitening, o'er the bosom of the sky.
Monastic pile, farewell! to Solitude
I leave thy ruins; though, not more with thee,
Often than on the highways of the world,
Where throng the busy multitudes astir,
Dwells Solitude. On many a pensive eve,
My thoughts have brooded on the changeful scene,
Gazed at it through the microscope of Truth,
And found it, as the Royal Psalmist found,
In all its issues, and in all its hopes,
Mere vanity. With ken reverting far
Through the bright Eden of departed years,
Here Contemplation, from the stir of life
Estranged, might treasure many a lesson deep;
And view, with unsophisticated eye,
The lowly state, and lofty destiny,
The pride and insignificance of man!

LINES IN

THE PARK OF KELBURN CASTLE.

I.

A LOVELY eve! though yet it is but spring
Led on by April,—a refulgent eve,
With its soft west wind, and its mild white clouds,
Silently floating through the depths of blue.
The bird, from out the thicket, sends a gush
Of song, that heralds summer, and calls forth
The squirrel from its fungus-covered cave
In the old oak. Where do the conies sport?
Lo! from the shelter of yon flowering furze,
O'ermantling, like an aureate crown, the brow
Of the grey rock, with sudden bound, and stop
And start, the mother with her little ones,
Cropping the herbage in its tenderest green;
While overhead the elm, and oak, and ash,
Weave for the hundredth time their annual boughs,
Bright with their varied leaflets.
Hark! the bleat
From yon secluded haunt, where hill from hill
Diverging leaves, in sequestration calm,

A holm of pastoral loveliness: the lamb,
Screened from the biting east, securely roams
There, in wild gambol with its peers, on turf
Like emerald velvet, soft and smooth; and starts
Aside from the near waterfall, whose sheet
Winds foaming down the rocks precipitous,
Now seen, and now half-hidden by the trunks
Contorted, and the wide umbrageous boughs
Of time and tempest-nurtured woods. Away
From the sea-murmur ceaseless, up between
The green secluding hills, that hem it round
As 'twere with conscious love, stands Kelburn House,
With its grey turrets, in baronial state,[38]
A proud memento of the days when men
Thought but of war and safety. Stately pile
And lovely woods! not often have mine eyes
Gazed o'er a scene more picturesque, or more
Heart-touching in its beauty. Thou wert once
The guardian of these valleys, and the foe
Approaching heard, between himself and thee,
The fierce, down-thundering, mocking waterfall;
While, on thy battlements, in glittering mail,
The warder glided; and the sentinel,—
As neared the stranger horseman to thy gates,
And gave the pass-word, which no answer found,—
Plucked from his quiver the unerring shaft,
Which, from Kilwinning's spire, had oft brought down
The mock Papingo.[39]
Mournfully, alas!
Yet in thy quietude not desolate,

Now, like a relic of the times gone by,
Down from thy verdant throne, upon the sea,
Which glitters like a sheet of molten gold,
Thou lookest thus, at eventide, while sets,
In opal and in amethystine hues,
The day o'er distant Arran, with its peaks
Sky-piercing, yet o'erclad with winter's snows
In desolate grandeur; and the cottaged fields
Of nearer Bute smile in their vernal green,
A picture of repose. High overhead
The gull, far-shrieking, through yon stern ravine
Of wild, rude rocks, where brawls the mountain stream,
Wings to the sea, and seeks, beyond its foams,
Its own precipitous cliff upon the coast
Of fair and fertile Cumbrae; while the rook,
Conscious of coming eventide, forsakes
The leafing woods, and round the chimneyed roofs
Caws as he wheels, alights, and then anon
Renews his circling flight in clamorous joy.

II.

Mountains that face bald Arran! though the sun
Now, with the ruddy lights of eventide,
Gilds every pastoral summit on which Peace,
Like a descended angel, sits enthroned,
Forth gazing on a scene as beautiful
As Nature e'er outspread for mortal eye;
And but the voice of distant waterfall
Sings lullaby to bird and beast, and wings
Of insects murmurous, multitudinous,

That in the low, red, level beams commix,
And weave their elfin dance,—another time
And other tones were yours, when on each peak
At hand, and through Argyle and Lanark shires,
Startling black midnight, flared the beacon lights,
And when from out the west the castled steep
Of Broadwick reddened with responsive blaze.[40]
A night was that of doubt and of suspense,
Of danger and of daring, in the which
The fate of Scotland in the balance hung
Trembling, and up and down wavered the scales;
But Hope grew brighter with the rising sun,
And Dawn looked out, to see upon the shore
The Bruce's standard floating on the gale,
A call to freedom!—barks from every isle
Pouring with clumps of spears!—from every dell
The throng of mail-clad men!—vassal and lord,
With ponderous curtal-axe, and broadsword keen,
Banner and bow; while, overhead, afar
And near, the bugles rang amid the rocks,
Echoing in wild reverberation shrill,
And scaring from his heathery lair the deer,
The osprey from his island cliff of rest.

III.

But not alone by that fierce trumpet-call,
Through grove and glen, on mount and pastoral hill,
The brute and bird were roused—by it again,
And by the signal blaze upon the hills,
And by the circling of the fiery cross,

Then once again were Scotland's children roused ;—
With swelling hearts and loud acclaim they heard
The summons, saw the signal, and cast off
With indignation in the dust the weeds
Of their inglorious thraldom. Every hearth
Wiped the red rust from its ancestral sword,
And sent it forth avenging to the field
In brightness—but with Freedom to be sheathed !
Yea, while the mother and the sister mourned,
And while the maiden, half-despairingly,
Wept for her love, who might return no more,
The grey-haired father, leaning on his staff,
Infirm, felt for a moment to his heart
The youthful fire return, and inly mourned
That he could do no more—no more than send
A blessing after his young gallant boy,
Armed for the battles of his native land,
Nor wished him back, unless with Freedom won !

IV.

To olden times my reveries have roamed—
While twilight hangs above her silver star,
Which in the waveless deep reflected shines—
Have roamed to glory and war, and the fierce days
Of Scotland's renovation, when the Bruce
Beheld the sun of Bannockburn go down,
And wept for gladness that the land was free !
Fitful and fair, yet clouded with a haze,
As 'twere the mantle of uncertainty—
The veil of doubt—to memory awakes

The bright heart-stirring past, when human life
(For but its flashing points to us remain)
Was half romance; and were it not that yet,
In stream, and crag, and isle, and crumbling walls
Of keep and castle, still remains to us
Physical proof that history is no mere
Hallucination, oftentimes the mind
(So different is the present from the past)
Would deem its pageant an illusion all.

v.

Arran, and Bute, and Cumbrae, and ye peaks
Glowing like sapphires in the utmost west,
Sweet scenes of beauty and peace, farewell! The eyes
But of a passing visitor are mine
On you. Before this radiant eve, enshrined
For ever in my inmost soul, ye were
Known but in name; but now ye are mine own,
One of the pictures which fond memory,
In musing phantasy, will oft-times love
To conjure up, gleaning, amid the stir
And strife of multitudes, as 'twere repose,
By dwelling on the tranquil and serene!

THE

THORN OF PRESTON.

Reviving with the genial airs,
  Beneath the azure heaven of spring,
Thy stem of ancient vigour bears
  Its branches green and blossoming;
  The birds around thee hop and sing,
Or flit, on glossy pinions borne,
  Above thy time-resisting head,
  Whose umbrage overhangs the dead,
Thou venerable Thorn![a1]

Three ages of mankind have pass'd
  To silence and to sleep, since thou,
Rearing thy branches to the blast,
  As glorious, and more green than now,
  Sheltered beneath thy shadowy brow
The warrior from the dews of night:
  To doubtful sleep himself he laid,
  Enveloped in his tartan plaid,
And dreaming of the fight.

Day open'd in the orient sky
With wintry aspect, dull and drear;
On every leaf, while glitteringly
The rimy hoar-frost did appear.
Blue Ocean was unseen, though near;
And hazy shadows seem'd to draw,
In silver with their mimic floods,
A line above the Seton woods,
And round North Berwick Law.

Hark! 'twas the bagpipe that awoke
Its tones of battle and alarms![42]
The royal drum, with doubling stroke,
In answer, beat, "To arms—to arms!"
If tumult and if war have charms,
Here might that bliss be sought and found:
The Saxon line unsheaths the sword;
Rushes the Gael, with battle-word,
Across the stubble ground.

Alas! that British might should wield
Destruction o'er a British plain;
That hands, ordain'd to bear the shield,
Should bring the poison'd lance to drain
The life-blood from a brother's vein,
And steep ancestral fields in gore!
Yet, Preston, such thy fray began;
Thy marsh-collected waters ran
Empurpled to the shore.

The noble Gardiner, bold of soul,
Saw, spirit-sunk, his dastards flee,[43]
Disdain'd to let a fear control,
And, striving by the side of thee,
Fell, like a champion of the free!
And Brymer, too, who scorn'd to yield,
Here took his death-blow undismay'd,
And, sinking slowly downward, laid
His back upon the field.

Descendant of a royal line—
A line unfortunate and brave!
Success a moment seemed to shine
On thee—'twas sunbeams on a grave!
Thy home a hiding-place—a cave,
With foxes destined soon to be!
To sorrow and to suffering wed,
A price on thy devoted head,
And blood-hounds tracking thee!

'Twas morn; but ere the solar ray
Shot, burning, from the west abroad,
The field was still; the soldier lay
Beneath the turf on which he trod,
Within a cold and lone abode,
Beside the spot whereon he fell;
For ever sever'd from his kind,
And from the home he left behind—
His own paternal dell!

Sheathed in their glittering panoply,
Or wrapt in war-cloak, blood-besprent.
Within one common cemetery,
The lofty and the low were pent:
No longer did the evening tent
Their mirth and wassail-clamour hear:
Ah! many a maid of ardent breast
Shed for his sake, whom she loved best,
The heart-consuming tear!

Thou, lonely tree, survivest still—
Thy bloom is white, thy leaf is green;
I hear the tinkling of a rill;
All else is silent: and the scene,
Where battle raged, is now serene
Beneath the purple fall of night.
Yet oft, beside the plough, appear,
Casque, human bone, and broken spear,
Sad relics of the fight!

THE BASS ROCK.

The scout, the scart, the cattiwake,
The solan-goose sits on the laik,
Yearly in the spring.
RAY'S ITINERARIES, (1661.)

I.

'TWAS Summer's depth; a more enlivening sun
Never drank up the gelid morning dews,
Or crimsoned with its glow the July flowers,
Than that on which our boat, with oar and sail,
Left Canta Bay, with its embosomed huts,
And through the freshening tide, with eager prow,
Bore onward to thy rocks, horrific Bass!

II.

Light blew the breeze, the billows curled around;
'Mid clouds of sea-fowl, whose unceasing screams
Uncouth filled all the empty heavens with sound,
Forward we clove: at times the solan's wing,
As if to show its majesty of strength,
Brushed near us with a roughly winnowing noise;
And now, aloft, a lessening speck, was seen
Over the cloudlets, 'mid engulfing blue.

Around us, and around, the plovers wheeled
In myriads, restless, multitudinous,
Wedge-like, at intervals their inner plumes
Glancing like silver in the sunny ray;
The parrot dived beside us; slowly past
Floated the graceful eider-duck; with shrieks
The snipe zig-zagg'd, then vanished in alarm;
And all in air and ocean seemed astir;
Until the sole and narrow landing-place[44]
We reached, and, grappling with the naked crags,
Wound to a smoother ledge our sheer ascent.

III.

Never was transit more electrical!
An hour ago, and by thy traceried walls
We drove, Newbyth, beneath the o'erhanging boughs
Of forests old, wherein the stock-dove plained
In sequestration; while the rabbit, scared,
Took to its hole under the hawthorn's root;
And lay our path through bright and bloomy fields,
Where, from the scented clover to the cloud,
Arose the lyric lark on twinkling wings;
And linnets from each brake responsively
Piped to each other, till the shady groves
Of Tyningham seemed melody's abode.
Everything breathed of happiness and life,
Which in itself was joy; the hill-side farms
Basked in the sunshine with their yellow cones
Of gathered grain; the ploughboy with his team
Stalked onward whistling; and, from cottage roofs,

Bluely ascended to the soft clear sky
The wreathing smoke, which spake domestic love,
In household duties cheerfully performed;
And, wading in the neighbouring rivulet,
With eager fingers, from the wild-flower banks
Sweet-scented, childhood gathered nameless blooms.
And now, as if communion were cut off
Utterly with mankind and their concerns,
Amid the bleak and barren solitude
Of that precipitous and sea-girt rock
We found ourselves; the waves their orison
Howled to the winds, which from the breezy North
Over the German Ocean came, as 'twere
To moan in anger through the rifted caves,
Whose echoes gave a desolate response!

IV.

Far in the twilight of primeval time,
This must have been a place (ponderingly
Methought) where aboriginal men poured forth
Their erring worship to the elements,
Long ere the Druid, in the sullen night
Of old oak forests, tinged his altar-stone
With blood of brotherhood. It must be so;
So awfully doth the spirit of their powers—
The desolating winds, the trampling waves,
With their white manes, the storm-shower, and the sun—
Here, in this solitude, impress the mind.
Yet human hearts have beat in this abode,[45]
All sullen and repulsive though it be—

The hearts of priests and princes; and full oft
Lone captive eyes, for many a joyless month,
Have marked the sun, that rose o'er eastward May,
Expire in glory o'er the summits dun
Of the far Grampians, in the golden west:
Yea, still some ruins, weather-stained, forlorn,
And mottled with the melancholy weeds
That love the salt breeze, tell of prisons grim,[46]
Where, in an age as rude, though less remote,
Despotic Policy its victims held
In privacy immured; and where, apart,
The fearless champions of our faith reformed,
Shut up, and severed from the land they loved,
Breathed out their prayers—that day-spring from on high
Should visit us—to God's sole listening ear!

v.

A mighty mass majestic, from the roots
Of the old sea, thou risest to the sky,
In thy wild, bare sublimity alone.
All-glorious was the prospect from thy peak,
Thou thunder-cloven Island of the Forth!
Landward Tantallon lay, with ruined walls[47]
Sepulchral—like a giant, in old age,
Smote by the blackening lightning-flash, and left
A prostrate corpse upon the sounding shore!
Behind arose your congregated woods,
Leuchie, Balgone, and Rockville—fairer none.
Remoter, mingling with the arch of heaven,
Blue Cheviot told where, stretching by his feet,

Bloomed the fair valleys of Northumberland.
Seaward, the Forth, a glowing, green expanse,
Studded with many a white and gliding sail,
Winded its serpent form—the Ochils rich
Down gazing in its mirror; while beyond,
The Grampians reared their bare untrodden scalps;
Fife showed her range of scattery coast-towns old—
Old as the days of Scotland's early kings—
Malcolm, and Alexander, and the Bruce—
From western Dysart, to the dwindling point
Of famed and far St Andrews: all beyond
Was ocean's billowy and unbounded waste,
Sole broken by the verdant islet May,[48]
Whose fitful lights, amid surrounding gloom,
When midnight mantles earth, and sea, and sky,
From danger warns the home-bound mariner;
And one black speck—a distant sail—which told
Where mingled with its line the horizon blue.

VI.

Who were thy visitants, lone Rock, since Man
Shrank from thy sea-flower solitudes, and left
His crumbling ruins 'mid thy barren shelves?
Up came the cormorant, with dusky wing,
From northern Orkney, an adventurous flight,
Floating far o'er us in the liquid blue,
While many a hundred fathom in the sheer
Abyss below, where foamed the surge unheard,
Dwindled by distance, flocks of mighty fowl
Floated like feathery specks upon the wave.

The rower with his boat-hook struck the mast,
And lo! the myriad wings, that like a sheet
Of snow o'erspread the crannies—all were up![49]
The gannet, guillemot, and kittiwake,
Marrot and plover, snipe and eider-duck,
The puffin, and the falcon, and the gull—
Thousands on thousands, an innumerous throng,
Darkening the noontide with their winnowing plumes,
A cloud of animation! the wide air
Tempesting with their mingled cries uncouth!

VII.

Words cannot tell the sense of loneliness
Which then and there, cloud-like, across my soul
Fell, as our weary steps clomb that ascent.
Amid encompassing mountains I have paused,
At twilight, when alone the little stars,
Brightening amid the wilderness of blue,
Proclaimed a world not God-forsaken quite;
I've walked, at midnight, on the hollow shore,
In darkness, when the trampling of the waves,
The demon-featured clouds, and howling gales,
Seemed like returning chaos—all the fierce
Terrific elements in league with night—
Earth crouching underneath their tyrannous sway,
And the lone sea-bird shrieking from its rock;
And I have mused in churchyards far remote,
And long forsaken even by the dead,
To blank oblivion utterly given o'er,
Beneath the waning moon, whose mournful ray

Showed but the dim hawk sleeping on his stone:
But never, in its moods of phantasy,
Had to itself my spirit shaped a scene
Of sequestration more profound than thine,
Grim throne of solitude, stupendous Bass!
Oft in the populous city, 'mid the stir
And strife of hurrying thousands, each intent
On his own earnest purpose, to thy cliffs
Sea-girt, precipitous—the solan's home—
Wander my reveries; and thoughts of thee
(While scarcely stirs the ivy round the porch,
And all is silent as the sepulchre)
Oft make the hush of midnight more profound.

THOMSON'S BIRTH-PLACE.

(EDNAM, ROXBURGHSHIRE.)

I.

"Is Ednam, then, so near us? I must gaze
On Thomson's cradle-spot—as sweet a bard
(Theocritus and Maro blent in one)
As ever graced the name—and on the scenes
That first to poesy awoke his soul,
In hours of holiday, when Boyhood's glance
Invested nature with an added charm."

So saying to myself, with eager steps,
Down through the avenues of Sydenham—
(Green Sydenham, to me for ever dear,
As birth-house of the being with whose fate
Mine own is sweetly mingled—even with thine
My wife, my children's mother)—on I strayed
In a perplexity of pleasing thoughts,
Amid the perfume of blown eglantine,
And hedgerow wild-flowers, memory conjuring up
In many a sweet, bright, fragmentary snatch,
The truthful, soul-subduing lays of him
Whose fame is with his country's being blent,
And cannot die; until at length I gained
A vista from the road, between the stems
Of two broad sycamores, whose filial boughs
Above in green communion intertwined:
And lo! at once in view, nor far remote,
The downward country, like a map unfurled,
Before me lay—green pastures—forests dark—
And, in its simple quietude revealed,
Ednam, no more a visionary scene.

II.

A rural church; some scattered cottage roofs,
From whose secluded hearths the thin blue smoke,
Silently wreathing through the breezeless air,
Ascended, mingling with the summer sky;
A rustic bridge, mossy and weather-stained;
A fairy streamlet, singing to itself;

And here and there a venerable tree
In foliaged beauty—of these elements,
And only these, the simple scene was formed.

III.

In soft poetic vision, brightly dim,
Oft had I dreamed of Ednam, of the spot
Where to the light of life the infant eye
Of Thomson opened, where his infant ear
First heard the birds, and where his infant feet
Oft chased the butterfly from bloom to bloom;
Until the syllables—a talisman—
Brought to my heart a realm of deep delight,
A true Elysian picture, steeped in hues
Of pastoral loveliness—whose atmosphere
Was such as wizard wand has charmed around
The hold of Indolence, where every sight
And every sound to a luxurious calm
Smoothed down the ever-swelling waves of thought;—
And oft, while o'er the Bard's harmonious page,
Nature's reflected picture, I have hung
Enchanted, wandering thoughts have crossed my mind
Of his lone boyhood—'mid the mazy wood,
Or by the rippling brook, or on the hill,
At dewy daybreak—and the eager thirst
With which his opening spirit must have drank
The shows of earth and heaven, till I have wished,
Yea rather longed with an impassioned warmth,
That on his birth-place I might gaze, and tread,

If only for one short and passing hour,
The pathways which, a century agone,
He must have trod—scenes by his pencil sketched,
And by the presence hallowed evermore,
Of him who sang the Seasons as they roll,
With all a Hesiod's truth, a Homer's power,
And the pure feeling of Simonides.

IV.

Now Ednam lay before me—there it lay—
No more phantasmagorial ; but the thought
Of Thomson vanished, nor would coalesce
And mingle with the landscape, as the dawn
Melts in the day, or as the cloud-fed stream
Melts in the sea, to be once more exhaled
In vapours, and become again a cloud.
For why? Let deep psychologists explain—
For me a spell was broken : this I know,
And nothing more besides, that this was not
My Poet's birth-place—earth etherealised
And spirit-hued—the creature of my dreams,
By fancy limn'd ; but quite an alien scene,
Fair in itself—if separate from him—
Fair in itself, and only for itself
Seeking our praises or regard. The clue
Of old associations was destroyed—
A leaf from Pleasure's volume was torn out—
And, as the fairy frost-work leaves the grass,
While burns the absorbing red ray of the morn,

A tract of mental Eden was laid waste,
Never to blossom more!
Alone I stood,
By that sweet hamlet lonely and serene,
Gazing around me in the glowing light
Of noon, while overhead the rapturous lark
Soared as it sung, less and less visible,
Till but a voice 'mid heaven's engulfing blue.
No scene could philosophic life desire
More tranquil for its evening; nor could love,
Freed from ambition, for enjoyment seek
A holier haunt of sequestration calm.
Yet though the tones and smiles of Nature bade
The heart rejoice, a shadow overspread
My musings—for a fairy-land of thought
Had melted in the light of common day.
A moment's truth had disenchanted years
Of cherished vision: Ednam, which before
Spoke to my spirit as a spell, was now
The index to a code of other thoughts;
And turning on my heel—a poorer man
Than morning looked on me—I sighed to think
How oft our joys depend on ignorance!

NOTES

TO POEMS SUGGESTED BY CELEBRATED SCOTTISH LOCALITIES.

1.

All about thee wears a gloom
Of something sterner than the tomb.—P. 162.

THE ruins of the Tower of Ercildoune, once the abode and property of the famous True Thomas, the poet and soothsayer, are still to be seen at a little distance from the village of the same name in Lauderdale, pleasantly situated on the eastern bank of the Leader, which, in pronunciation, has been corrupted into Earlstoun. About the ruins themselves there is nothing peculiar or remarkable, save their authenticated antiquity, and the renown shed upon them as the relics of "Learmonth's high and ancient hall." Part of the walls, and nearly the whole of the subterranean vaults, yet remain. A stone in the wall of the church of Earlstoun still bears the inscription—

"Auld Rhymer's race
Lies in this place."

He must have died previous to 1299; for in that year his son resigned the property of his deceased father to the Trinity House of Soltra, as a document testifying this circumstance is preserved in the Advocates' Library. On a beautiful morning in September, "long, long ago," when I was yet ignorant that any part of the ruins were in existence, they were pointed out to me, and, I need not add, awakened a thousand stirring associations connected with the legends, the superstitions, and

the history of the mediæval ages—when nature brought forth "Gorgons, and hydras, and chimeras dire," and social life seemed entirely devoted to "Ladye love, and war, renown, and knightly worth."

2.

Thee, 'tis said, dire forms molest,
That cannot die, or will not rest.—P. 163.

The ruins of the magician's tower are still regarded with a superstitious dread by the neighbouring peasantry; and to hint a doubt to such of their being haunted by "forms that come not from earth or Heaven," would imply the hardihood and daring scepticism of the Sadducee. No doubt, this awe has greatly added to the desolation and solitude of the place; for the imputed prophecy of Thomas regarding the destruction of his house and home has been literally verified—

"The hare sall kittle on my hearth-stane,
And there will never be a Laird Learmonth again."

In reference to this topic, Sir Walter Scott, in his notes to the *Border Minstrelsy*, tells a good story. "The veneration," he says "paid to his dwelling-place, even attached itself in some degree to a person who, within the memory of man, chose to set up his residence in the ruins of Learmonth's Tower. The name of this man was Murray, a kind of herbalist, who, by dint of some knowledge of simples, the possession of a musical clock, an electrical machine, and a stuffed alligator, added to a supposed communication with Thomas the Rhymer, lived for many years in very good credit as a wizard."

3.

Of Tristrem brave, and fair Isolde.—P. 163.

Although the matter has been made one of dispute, there seems little reason to doubt that Thomas the Rhymer was really and truly the author of *Sir Tristrem*—a romance which obtained almost universal popularity in its own day, and which was paraphrased, or rather imitated, by the minstrels of Normandy and Bretagne. The principal opponent of this conclusion is the able antiquary, Mr Price, who, in his edition of *Warton's History of English Poetry*, has appended some elaborate remarks to the first volume, with the purpose of proving

that the story of Sir Tristrem was known over the continent of Europe before the age of Thomas of Ercildoune. That, however, by no means disproves that Thomas was the author of the Auchinleck MS., edited by Sir Walter Scott. That its language may have suffered from passing orally from one person to another before being committed to writing at all, is not improbable.

Be this as it may, such was the instability of literary popularity before the invention of printing, that at last only one copy of True Thomas' romance was known to exist. From this, which belongs to the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh, and is the earliest specimen of Scottish poetry extant, the author of *Marmion* gave the world his edition in 1804, filling up the blanks in the narrative, and following out the story in a style of editorial emendation, and competency for his task, not often to be met with. Taken all in all, the *rifacimento* is not one of the least extraordinary achievements of a most extraordinary literary career.

The more hurried reader will find a succinct, and very luminous account of Sir Tristrem, with illustrative extracts, in Mr Ellis' *Specimens of Aneient Poetry*, vol. i., where that distinguished scholar evinces his usual taste, research, and critical discrimination.

4.

Beneath the mystic Eildon Tree.—P. 164.

Tradition reports that, from under this tree, the Rhymer was wont to utter his prophecies, and also, that it was from his spot he was enticed away by the Queen of Fairyland:—

"True Thomas lay on Huntlie bank,
A ferlie he spied wi' his ee:
And there he saw a lady bright
Come riding down by the Eildon Tree.

Her shirt was of the grass-green silk,
Her mantle of the velvet fine:
At ilka tett of her horse's mane,
Hung fifty silver bells and nine."

5.

And still the Goblin Burn steals round
The purple heath, with lonely sound.—P. 164.

A small stream in the neighbourhood of the Eildon Tree (or rather Stone, as its quondam site is now pointed out by a piece

of rock) has received the name of the Bogle Burn, from the spirits which were thought to haunt the spot in attendance on the prophet.

6.

And many a wound of many a field
Of blood, in Bruce's blood be healed.—P. 165.

Among the prophecies ascribed to the Rhymer is the following, evidently relating to the junction of the crowns under James VI. :—

"Then to the bairn I could say,
Where dwellest thou, in what countrye?
Or who shall rule the isle Britain
From the north to the south sea?

The French queen shall bear the son
Shall rule all Britain to the sea:
Which from the Bruce's blood shall come
As near as the ninth degree."

That severe, yet acute and candid, expurgator of historical truth, the late Lord Hailes, in a dissertation devoted to the prophecies of Bede, Merlin, Gildas, and our bard, makes it pretty distinctly appear that the lines just quoted are an interpolation, and do not appertain to True Thomas at all, but to Berlington, another approved soothsayer of a later age.

7.

————*Elfland's Queen*
Beheld the boy-bard on the green.—P. 165.

The description of the journey to Fairyland in the old ballad is exquisitely poetical—few things more so :—

"'Oh see ye not yon narrow road,
So thick beset with thorns and briers?
That is the path of righteousness,
Though after it but few inquires.

'And see not ye that braid, braid road,
That lies across that lily leven?
'That is the path of wickedness,
Though some call it the path to Heaven.

'And see not ye that bonny road
That winds across the ferny brae?
That is the road to fair Elfland,
Where thou and I this night maun gae.'

* * * * * *

Oh they rode on, and farther on,
And they waded through rivers aboon the knee:
And they saw neither sun nor moon,
But they heard the roaring of the sea.

It was mirk, mirk night, there was nae stern light,
And they waded through red blude to the knee;
For a' the blude that's shed on earth
Runs through the springs o' that countrie."

BORDER MINSTRELSY, vol. iv.

8.

———*Be my mind*
To science, when it deadens, blind.—P. 167.

As the boundaries of science are enlarged, those of poetry are proportionately curtailed. The contrary is arbitrarily maintained by many, for whose judgment in other matters I have respect; but in this I cannot believe them: for in what does poetry consist? It may be defined to be objects or subjects viewed through the mirror of imagination, and descanted on in harmonious language. If such a definition be adopted—and it will be found not an incomprehensive one—then it must be admitted, that the very exactness of knowledge is a barrier to the laying on of that colouring, through which alone facts can be converted into poetry. The best proof of this would be a reference to what has been generally regarded as the best poetry of the best authors, in ancient and modern times, more especially with reference to the external world—for of the world of mind all seems to remain, from Plato downwards, in the same state of glorious uncertainty, and probably will ever do so. The precision of science would at once annul the grandest portions of the Psalms—of Isaiah—of Ezekiel—of Job—of the Revelation. It would convert the *Medea* of Euripides—the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid—and the *Atys* of Catullus, into rhapsodies; and render the *Fairy Queen* of Spenser—the *Tempest* and *Mid-Summer Night's Dream* of Shakspeare—the *Ancient Mariner* of Coleridge—the *Kilmeny* of Hogg—the *Edith and Nora* of Wilson—the *Thalaba* of Southey—the *Cloud* and *Sensitive Plant* of Shelley, little better than rant, bombast, and fustian. In the contest between Bowles, Byron, and Campbell on this subject, the lesser poet had infinitely the better of the two greater; but he did not make sufficient use of his advantage, either in argument or illustration—for no one could be hardy enough to maintain that a newly-built castle is equally poetical with a similar one in ruins, or a man-of-war, fresh from the stocks, to one that had long braved the battle and the breeze.

Stone and lime, as well as wood and sail-cloth, require associations. Of themselves they are prose: it is only what they acquire that renders them subjects for poetry. Were it otherwise, Pope's *Essay on Criticism* would be, as a poem, equal to his *Eloisa*, for it exhibits the same power, and the same judgment; and Darwin's *Botanic Garden* and *Temple of Nature* might displace from the shelf Milton's *Comus* and *Paradise Lost*. Wherever light penetrates the obscure, and dispels the uncertain, a domesne has been lost to the realm of imagination.

That poetry can never be robbed of its chief elements I firmly believe, for these elements are indestructible principles in human nature, and while men breathe there is room for a new Sappho, or a new Simonides; nor in reference to the present state of poetical literature, although we verily believe that neither even *Marmion* nor *Childe Harold* would be now received as we delight to know they were some thirty or forty years ago, still we do not despair that poetry will ultimately recover from the staggering blows which science has inflicted, in the shape of steam—of railway—of electro-magnetism—of geology—of political economy and statistics—in fact, by a series of disenchantments. Original genius may form new elements, extract new combinations, and, at least, be what the kaleidoscope is to the rainbow. But this alters not the position with which we set out. In the foamy seas we can never more expect to behold Proteus leading out his flocks; nor, in the stream, another Narcissus admiring his fair face; nor Diana again descending to Endymion. We cannot hope another Macbeth to meet with other witches on the blasted heath, or another Faust to wander amid the mysteries of another Walpurgis Night. Rocks are stratified by time as exactly as cloth is measured by tailors, and Echo, no longer a vagrant, is compelled quietly to submit to the laws of acoustics.

9.

The voice of triumph and of wail,
Of victor and of vanquished blent.—P. 163.

The celebrated battle of Roslin was fought on the 24th of February 1302, during the guardianship of Scotland by Comyn, after the dethroned king had been conveyed by the messengers of the Pope from his captivity in England to his castle of Bailleul in France, where, in obscurity and retirement, he passed the remainder of his life.

Aware we are that our Scottish historians, Fordun and Wyntoun—both of whom give accounts of this battle—are entitled patriotically to be a little partial; but it is curious, as Mr Tytler remarks, (*Hist.*, vol. i. p. 440. Note N., p. 196,) how far Lord Hailes, "from an affectation of superiority to national prejudice," passes over or disallows many corroborating circumstances admitted even by the English chroniclers themselves, Hemingford, Trivet, and Longtoft.

10.

By England's haughty Edward sent.—P. 169.

Sir John de Seagrave was appointed Governor of Scotland by Edward I., and marched from Berwick towards Edinburgh, about the beginning of Lent, with an army of twenty thousand men, consisting chiefly of cavalry, and officered by some of the best and bravest leaders of England. Among these were two brothers of the governor, whom Hemingford designates as "*milites strenuissimi*," and Robert de Neville, a nobleman who had greatly distinguished himself in the Welsh wars. This powerful force was divided into three sections, one of which was commanded by Seagrave himself, the second by Ralph de Manton, and the third by Neville; and, on approaching Roslin, as no enemy was met with, each encamped on its own ground, without any established communication with the others. Sir John Comyn and Sir Simon Frazer, who were at Biggar with a small force of eight thousand cavalry, marched from that place during the night, to take the enemy by surprise, and attacked Seagrave with his division on the Moor of Roslin. The commander, with his brother and son, as well as sixteen knights and thirty esquires, were made prisoners, and the Scots had begun to plunder, when the second division appeared. This also was routed with great slaughter, and Ralph de Manton taken captive. No sooner, however, was this second triumph achieved, than the last division, under Neville, appeared in the distance. Worn out with their march and two successive attacks, the first impulse of the Scots was to retreat; but the proximity of the enemy rendered this impossible, and a third conflict commenced, which, after being obstinately disputed, terminated in the death of Neville, and the total rout of his followers. The carnage is said to have been dreadful, as the whole of the prisoners taken in the first and second engagements were necessarily put to death.

11.

The Wallace and the Græme have thrown
The lustre of their deeds behind.—P. 169.

After the disastrous battle of Falkirk, in which Sir John the Grahame and Sir John Stewart of Bonkill were slain, Wallace, disgusted with the jealousy and treacherous conduct of the Barons, retired into privacy. It was during this sequestration from public affairs that the battle of Roslin was fought.

The tombs of Grahame and Stewart are still extant in the churchyard of Falkirk, having been severally more than once renewed.

12.

For Scottish mothers bring forth men.—P. 169.

"Bring forth men-children only!
For thy undaunted mettle should compose
Nothing but males."

Macbeth.

13.

To blast these beauteous scenes around.—P. 171.

"It is telling a tale which has been repeated a thousand times, to say that a morning of leisure can scarcely be anywhere more delightfully spent than in the woods of Roslin and on the banks of the Esk. In natural beauty, indeed, the scenery may be equalled, and in grandeur exceeded, by the Cartland Crags, near Lanark, the dell of Craighall, in Augusshire, and probably by other landscapes of the same character which have been less celebrated; but Roslin and its adjacent scenery have other associations, dear to the antiquarian and the historian, which may fairly entitle it to precedence over every other Scottish scene of the same kind."—*Provincial Antiquities.*

14.

Blue Esk to Gorton's listening woods.—P. 171.

Gorton lies between Roslin and Hawthornden, and on the same side of the river as the latter. It is celebrated for its caves, which are in the cliff facing the river, and so covered up with bushes and brambles that it is difficult to discover the entrance to them. They are cut in the form of a cross, and are

supposed to have been the abode of hermits. During the unhappy reign of David II., when Scotland was overrun by the English, they yielded refuge to Sir Alexander Ramsey of Dalwolsey and a band of chosen followers, noted for patriotism and gallantry.

15.

St Clair! thy princely halls
In ruin sink decay'd.—P. 172.

The Castle and Chapel of Roslin are too well known to the lovers of the picturesque to be more than merely alluded to here. The origin of the castle is so remote that, says Chalmers, (*Caledonia*, vol. ii. p. 571,) it is laid in fable: in fact, it is beyond the date of authentic record. The ruins, with their tremendous triple range of vaults, are still, from their extent and situation, extremely imposing. The chapel, which is still in tolerable preservation, and has been lately carefully repaired, is one of the finest specimens of florid Gothic architecture north of the Tweed. It was founded in 1446 by William St Clair, Prince of Orkney, Duke of Oldenburgh, Earl of Caithness and Stratherne, &c., High Chancellor, Chamberlain, and Lieutenant of Scotland. Indeed, as Godscroft says of him, his titles were such as might "weary even a Spaniard." The barons of Roslin, each in his armour, lie buried in a vault beneath the floor.

16.

——*The bones of King Robert*
Find an honour'd and holy asylum in thee.—P. 173.

"Immediately after the king's death, his heart was taken out, as he had himself directed. He was then buried with great state and solemnity under the pavement of the choir, in the Abbey Church of Dunfermline, and over his grave was raised a rich marble monument, which was made at Paris. Centuries passed on; the ancient church, with the marble monument, fell into ruins, and a more modern building was erected on the same site. This in our own days gave way to time, and, in clearing the foundations for a third church, the workmen laid open a tomb which proved to be that of Robert the Bruce. The lead coating in which the body was found enclosed was twisted round the head in the shape of a rude

crown. A rich cloth of gold, but much decayed, was thrown over it, and, on examining the skeleton, it was found that the breast-bone had been sawn asunder to get at the heart.

"There remained, therefore, no doubt that, after the lapse of almost five hundred years, his countrymen were permitted, with a mixture of delight and awe, to behold the very bones of their great deliverer."—TYTLER'S *Hist.*, vol. i. p. 421-2.

It is worthy of remark, that the greatest man which Scotland has produced since the hero of Bannockburn was present at the re-interment of these relics, and that Sir Walter Scott bent over the coffin of Robert the Bruce.

See an interesting Report of the discovery of the tomb and re-interment of the body of King Robert, by Sir Henry Jardine, in *Transactions of the Antiquarian Society of Scotland*, vol. ii. part ii. p. 435.

17.

The crash of Surrey's onward charging.—P. 177.

The cotemporary accounts of the battle of Flodden, English and Scottish, are now admitted to be full of error and exaggeration; and, indeed, no circumstantial account, freed from these, was given of it till the days of Pinkerton. Some corrections, even of it, with some additional particulars, will be found in Tytler's *Scotland*, vol. v. Dr Lingard makes the number of the Scottish army forty thousand; and cotemporary English statements admit the English to have been twenty-six thousand; Mr Tytler remarking, that it is by no means improbable that this was rather a low estimate. It is that assumed in the rare tract entitled *The Batayle of Floddon-felde, called Brainston Moor*, some years ago reprinted by that eminent antiquary, Mr Pitcairn, whose *Celebrated Criminal Trials* have thrown such a mass of light on the curious mediæval history of Scotland.

18.

Like Solway's tide enlarging.—P. 177.

The Solway is remarkable for the rapidity with which its tides make and recede. Few things more graphic have ever been penned than the detailed account of the phenomena characterising the spring-tides in the Solway Firth, as given

in the novel of *Redgauntlet*. The line in the ballad of "Lochinvar,"

"Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like its tide,"

is familiar to the memory of all lovers of poetry.

19.

The Lords of Scotland's bannered towers.—P. 177.

"Among the slain were thirteen Earls—Crawford, Montrose, Huntly, Lennox, Argyle, Errol, Athole, Morton, Cassillis, Bothwell, Rothes, Caithness, and Glencairn; the King's natural son, the Archbishop of St Andrews, who had been educated abroad by Erasmus; the Bishops of Caithness and the Isles; the Abbots of Inchaffray and Kilwinning; and the Dean of Glasgow. To these we must add fifteen Lords and Chiefs of Clans—amongst whom were Sir Duncan Campbell of Glenurchy; Lauchlan Maclean of Dowart; Campbell of Lawers; and five Peers' eldest sons; besides La Motte, the French Ambassador; and the Secretary of the King. The names of the gentry who fell are too numerous for recapitulation, since there were few families of any note in Scotland which did not lose one relative or another, whilst some houses had to weep the death of all. It is from this cause that the sensations of sorrow and national lamentation, occasioned by the defeat, were peculiarly poignant and lasting; so that, to this day, few Scotsmen can hear the name of Flodden without a shudder of gloomy regret."—TYTLER'S *History of Scotland*, vol. v. p. 82.

20.

What it wished full long believed.—P. 178.

From the circumstance of several of the Scottish nobles having worn at the battle of Flodden a dress similar to the King's, and from the reports that he had been seen alive subsequent to the defeat, many were led long and fondly to believe that, in accordance with a vow, he had gone to Jerusalem on a pilgrimage, to merit absolution for the death of his father; and that, on his return, he would assert his right to the crown.—See WEEVER'S *Funeral Monuments*, p. 181.

By others the Earl of Home was accused, not only of having

failed to support the King in the battle, but of having carried him out of the field, and murdered him. Sir Walter Scott, in a note on the sixth canto of *Marmion*, says that "this tale was revived in my remembrance, by an unauthenticated story of a skeleton wrapped in a bull's hide, and surrounded with an iron chain, said to have been found in the well of Home Castle; for which, on inquiry, I could never find any better authority than the sexton of the parish having said, that *if the well were cleaned out, he would not be surprised at such a discovery.*"

No doubt can be entertained that James fell on the field, where he had fought less with the discretion of a leader than the chivalrous feelings of a knight. He was found on the following day among the slain, and recognised by Lord Dacre, although much disfigured from the number and magnitude of his wounds. It is mentioned by Hereford, in his *Annals*, (p. 22,) "that when James's body was found his neck was opened in the middle with a wide wound; his left hand, almost cut off in two places, did scarce hang to his arm, and the archers had shot him in many places of his body."

The remains of James were carried from the field, first to Berwick, and then to Richmond, where they were interred. His sword and dagger are preserved in the Herald's College, London, where they may still be seen.

21.

Like a phalanx round thee clung.—P. 178.

From a contemporary chronicle we learn that the battle commenced between four and five in the afternoon of the 5th September, and lasted till "within the night;" distinctly disproving the assertion of Dr Lingard, that the conflict was decided in little more than an hour. In the curious *Original Gazette of the Battle of Flodden*, printed by Pinkerton, from the French MS. in the Herald's Office, (Appendix to vol. ii. No. X.,) the Scottish King is stated to have been killed within a lance's length of the Earl of Surrey; and from the same source we learn that, though a large part of his division were killed, none were made prisoners—"a circumstance," as Sir Walter Scott remarks, "that testifies the desperation of their resistance."

22.

Mourned o'er the bright flowers wede away.—P. 178.

It is ascertained that the well-known and beautiful verses now sung as "The Flowers of the Forest" are the production of a lady of family in Roxburghshire, evidence of this fact having been produced by the late Dr Somerville of Jedburgh, to Sir Walter Scott; but it is equally true that the stanzas were only engrafted on the floating remnants of an ancient, and probably nearly contemporary ballad—the lines of the first stanza,

"I've heard them lilting, at the ewes' milking,"

and the concluding one,

"The flowers of the forest are a' wede away,"

being all that remain to tell of its existence, save another imperfect line, which, however, conveys an affecting image—

"I ride single on my saddle,
For the flowers of the forest are a' wede away."

To the great delight of all the lovers of Scottish music, the original melody of the song, along with those of "Bonny Dundee," "Waes my heart that we should sunder," "The last time I came o'er the Muir," "Johnny Faa," and several other established favourites, was recently discovered in the Skene MS.—a collection of ancient music, written between the years 1615 and 1620; and bequeathed, about twenty years ago, by Miss Elizabeth Skene of Curriehill and Hallyards, to the Faculty of Advocates. It was published in 1838, under the able editorship of Mr Dauney. By competent judges the old air is declared to differ from the modern one only in being at once more simple and more beautiful; and knowing it to have been sung by the bereaved of Flodden Field, does not destroy a single association, or disturb a single sentiment. By how many smoking hearths, through how many generations, has it caused tears to flow!

23.

The leaders and the legions, mad for war.—P. 180.

In 1544, great part of the town of Musselburgh, including the Town-House and the celebrated "Chapelle of Lauret," was destroyed by the English army under the Earl of Hertford; and, three years after that event, it became the mustering-

place for the Scottish forces — news having arrived of the approach of the Duke of Somerset to Newcastle, at the head of an army of sixteen thousand men, including two thousand horse. To oppose this well-appointed force, "the fiery cross" was sent through the country; and, in an incredibly short time, not less than thirty-six thousand men were congregated at Edmonstone Edge, between the capital and Dalkeith. The English were ultimately drawn up on Falside Brae, in the parish of Tranent, their right extending over the grounds of Walliford and Drummore towards the sea; but, on reconnoitring the position of the Scotch, the Protector found it so very strong—the steep banks of the Esk defending them in front, the morass of the Shirehaugh on the left, and the village of Inveresk, the mounds of the churchyard of St Michael's, and the bridge over the river protected with cannon on the right—that he declined to attack them.

This caution was fatal to his enemies; for, leaving their intrenched position on the morning of the 9th September, Lord Hume, with fifteen hundred light horse, appeared on Edgebricklin Brae, immediately beneath the English, and rushed forward with such impetuosity that Somerset, in the belief that they must be supported by some much more considerable force, gave strict orders to his men to keep their ranks. Impatient of such provocation, Lord Grey extorted leave to oppose them; and, when within a stone's cast, charged them down the hill at full speed with a thousand men-at-arms. The onset was terrible; but the demi-lances and barbed steeds of their opponents were more than a match for the slight hackneys of the Borderers, added to a fearful disadvantage of ground; and, after an unremitting conflict of three hours, the greater part of them were cut to pieces, thirteen hundred men being slain in sight of the Scottish camp, Lord Hume himself severely wounded, and his son taken prisoner.

For very interesting and circumstantial details of this ill-omened preface to the great battle of Pinkie, *vide* PATTEN'S *Account*, p. 46-7; HAYWARD *in* KENNET, vol. ii. p. 282; TYTLER'S *History*, vol. vi. p. 26-7, edit. first.

24.

Vainly that wall of serried steel oppose.—P. 181.

Subsequent to this preliminary action, the English made overtures to be allowed to retire unmolested back to England,

which, being unfortunately mistaken by the Scotch for a proof of weakness, were rejected by them; and, voluntarily abandoning their strong position, they crossed the Esk to meet the English, whose fleet, consisting of thirty-five ships of war, was anchored in the bay, and continued pouring cannon-shot among them as they crossed the bridge—by which the Master of Graham, son of the Earl of Montrose, with many others, was slain. It were superfluous to give an account of the well-known battle which followed. It is sufficient to remind the reader that, after five hours' tremendous fighting, during which the English cavalry had repeatedly, but in vain, attempted to break through the foot battalions commanded by the Earl of Angus, the Highlanders, mistaking a partial success on their own part for complete victory, prematurely gave way to their plundering propensities. At this time a retrograde movement was regarded by them as flight; the same panic seized the borough troops, who also threw down their arms. The Scots fled by three different ways—some towards Edinburgh, some towards the coast, and some towards Dalkeith; and on each route the carnage was dreadful, as a subsequent note from Patten—an eye-witness—testifies.

25.

Hushed are the cheers that rang thro' Otterburn,
Blunted the blades that crimson'd Ancrum-Moor.—P. 181.

The fame of the Douglas of Otterburn was well supported by his descendant, the Earl of Angus—the hero of the battle of Ancrum-Moor, which was fought only two years preceding that of Pinkie, on which field also he exhibited his wonted gallantry. On the former occasion, he is said to have uttered an exclamation which is exceedingly characteristic. When the Scots began to charge, seeing a heron arise out of the marsh, Angus cried out—"O that I had my white hawk here, that we might all join battle at once!"

26.

Thick as cattle pasture on a plain,
Lay round Loretto's hermitage the dead.—P. 182.

"With blode and slaughter of ye enemie," says old Patten, "this chase was continued v miles in length westward fro the place of their standinge, which was in ye fallow feldes of

Undreske, untille Edinborowe parke, and well nigh to the gates of the toune itself, and into Lyeth; and in breadth nie iiii myle, from the fryth sandes up unto Daketh southwarde. In all whiche space the dead bodies lay as thik as a man may notte cattel grasing in a full-plenished pasture. The ryvere ran al rede with blode, soo that in the same chase wear counted as well by some of our men that sumwhat diligently did maike it, as by sum of them take prisoners, that very much did lament it, to have been slayne above xiii thousande. In all thys cumpos of grounde, what with weapons, armes, handes, legges, heddes, blood, and dead bodyes, their flight mought have easily been tracted to every of their iii refuges."—*The Expedicion into Scotlãde of the Most Woortheley Fortunate Prince, Edward Duke of Soomerset, &c.* By W. PATTEN, Londoner, *ap.* DALZELL'S *Fragments of Scottish History.* 4to, Edinburgh, 1798.

The celebrated chapel dedicated to *Our Lady of Loretto* stood beyond the eastern gate of Musselburgh, and on the margin of the Links; and pilgrimages from all parts of the country were performed to this shrine. According to Keith, (280,) it was connected with the nunnery of Sciennes, in the south wing of Edinburgh; and Gough the antiquarian says regarding it (Camden's *Britannica*, vol. iii. 316) that ladies sent handsome presents to it with their baby-linens, which latter were consecrated to promote their safe recovery. Lesley relates (442) that, in August 1530, James V. performed a pilgrimage to it on foot from Stirling, before sötting sail for France to woo and win a partner for his throne. The celebrity of the place was upheld by the residence of a hermit, who inhabited a cell adjoining the chapel, and by the pretended performance of miracles. That the hermit was a notable man in his day, is evident from the circumstance of his having a satire addressed to him by Alexander, earl of Glencairn, exposing the hypocrisy of the Roman Catholic clergy. It is entitled *Ane Epistill direct fra the Halie Hermeit of Alareit, to his Brethren, the Gray Friars*, and thus begins—

> "I, Thomas Hermeit in Lauret,
> Sanct Francis' ordour do heartily greet," &c.

(*Vide* as quoted in Knox's *History of Reformation*, fol. xxiv.-v. Edin. 1732.)

For an account of the miracles, the curious reader is referred to a very remarkable passage in Row's *History of the Kirk of Scotland*, 1558 *to* 1639, p. 448 *et seq.* Wodrow Society's edition, 1842.

27.

Curdled with blood beneath the shades of eve.—P. 182.

Local tradition reports that the rivulet or burn of Pinkie—which was principally fed from the marsh of the *Howmire*, which lies almost in the centre of the battle-field, and around which the carnage was greatest—ran tinged with blood for three days after the fatal conflict.

Thus was literally fulfilled the prophecy attributed to Thomas the Rhymer, *(vide* Hart's *Collection :)*

"At Pinken Clugh there shall be spilt
Much gentle blood that day:
There shall the bear lose the guilt,
And the eagle bear it away."

Whether we agree with the accurate Lord Hailes or not regarding the antiquity of the above as relating to Thomas of Ercildoune, (see dissertation annexed to *Remarks on the History of Scotland,*) there can be no doubt of the genuineness of another rhyme on the same subject, as it is quoted in Patten's contemporary account:

"Between Seton and the sea,
Mony a man shall die that day."

"This battell and felde," says Patten, "the Scottes and we are not yet agreed how it shall be named. We cal it Muskelborough felde, because that it is the best towne (and yet bad enough) nigh the place of our meeting. Sum of them call it Seton felde, (a toune thear nie too,) by means of a blinde prophecy of theirs, which is this or sume suche saye,—"*Betwene Seton and the say, many a man shall die that day.*"

28.

There, 'mid its circle grey of mossy stone,
A time-worn Fleur-de-lis still marks the spot.—P. 183.

In the centre of a circle of trees, at the eastern extremity of the grounds of Eskgrove, and opposite to Pinkie Burn, a square pillar, surmounted by an antique stone representing a fleur-de-lis, marks the spot where the royal tent was pitched on the eve of the battle, and bears the following inscription—

THE PROTECTOR, DUKE OF SOMERSET,
ENCAMPED HERE, 10TH SEPTEMBER,
1547.

The pillar was erected by the late Lord Eskgrove.

29.

The mazy stream beneath is Roslin's Esk—
And what thou lookest on is Hawthornden.—P. 185.

The present house of Hawthornden is a mansion apparently of the seventeenth century, engrafted on the ancient baronial castle, in which Ben Jonson visited the Scottish poet, and from whose remains it is apparent that it had been constructed in times when comfort was less studied than security. It is still in the possession of the Drummonds through the maternal line; but, although yet partly furnished, Sir Francis Walker Drummond, the father of the present proprietor, removed the family residence to a more commodious mansion in the vicinity. Among its relics are a number of Jacobite portraits, and a dress worn by the Chevalier in 1745.

The Scottish founder of the Drummonds is said to have come from Hungary with Margaret, queen of Malcolm Canmore, seven hundred years ago. In the days of Robert the Bruce, Walter de Drummond was, according to Stowe's *Annals*, clerk-register to that illustrious monarch, and one of his commissioners in concluding a treaty of peace between England and Scotland at Newcastle in 1323. In David the First's reign, the Drummonds rendered themselves prominent by implacable and sanguinary feuds with the Monteiths — the betrayers of Wallace — which were only terminated by royal command, by a charter of agreement, dated on the banks of the Forth, over against Stirling, 17th May 1360, in the presence of Sir Hugh Eglinton and Sir Robert Erskine of Alloa, the King's two justiciaries, and which is still preserved in the family charter-chest.

Through Queen Annabella, the family became connected with the royal line of Scotland; and that lady's brother, Sir Malcolm Drummond, having married Douglas, heiress of Mar, succeeded to that ancient earldom. For his distinguished service at the battle of Otterburn, in having taken prisoner Sir Ralph Percy, the brother of Hotspur, he was rewarded with a pension of five hundred pounds per annum from the customs of Inverness, and was in great reputation with David Bruce, and with the second and third Roberts. The principal line of the Drummonds afterwards became Earls and Dukes of Perth — which titles they forfeited for their adherence to the cause of the Stuarts. They are now represented.

30.

———*A many-chambered cave*
With dormitory, and hollow well, and rooms,
Scooped by the hands of men.—P. 185.

Beneath the foundations of the ancient building there is a remarkable *souterrain*, supposed to have been a retreat of the aboriginal Britons, and which consists of several apartments, lighted by apertures in the face of the precipice, and furnished with a draw-well. In later times it served as a place of concealment to Sir Alexander Ramsay and other patriots, who had endeavoured to rescue Scotland from the tyranny of Edward III. Hawthornden, from its exquisite scenery, its ruins, its caves, and its classical associations, is still a great source of attraction to multitudes of summer ramblers. In 1843 it was visited by Queen Victoria and her suite.

31.

———*In the rock a cool recess,*
Christened immortally The Cypress Grove.—P. 186.

In this favourite haunt of his meditations, it is said that Drummond composed his curious discourse on Life, Death, and Immortality, which he has not very appositely termed *The Cypress Grove*. It is throughout indicative of his peculiar genius and turn of mind, and in style bears more than a remote analogy to Burton and Sir Thomas Browne. It is said to have been written after the author's recovery from a dangerous illness.

32.

That lived but in another—whom death took,
Blighting his fond affections in their spring.—P. 186.

"Notwithstanding his close retirement and serious application to his studies," says the biography attached to the first uniform edition of the works of Drummond, (Edinburgh, folio 1711,) "love stole in upon him, and did entirely captivate his heart; for he was on a sudden highly enamoured of a fine, beautiful young lady, daughter to Cunningham of Barns, an ancient and honourable family. He met with suitable returns of chaste love from her, and fully gained her affections. But when the day for the marriage was appointed, and all things ready for the solemnisation of it, she took a fever, and was

suddenly snatched away by it, to his great grief and sorrow. He expressed his grief for her in several letters and poems; and with more passion and sincerity celebrated his dead mistress than others use to praise their living ones."

After his bereavement Drummond went abroad, and travelled through Germany, France, and Italy, his chief places of residence being Paris and Rome. While on the Continent, he visited the most famous universities, formed friendships with the most learned men, and made an excellent collection of books in the ancient and modern languages—part of which he bequeathed to his Alma Mater, the College of Edinburgh, and part of which may yet be seen at Hawthornden. While in his forty-fifth year, and after having spent many seasons in literary retirement, he accidentally saw Elizabeth Logan, granddaughter to Sir Robert Logan of Restalrig, and was so struck with her likeness to his first love—whose memory he had ever fondly cherished—that he paid his addresses to, and married her.

Drummond was a devoted Cavalier, and his end is said to have been hastened by the fate of Charles I. He died on the 6th December of the same year, at the age of sixty-four. To me he has always seemed to hold nearly the same place in reference to Scottish, that the Earl of Surrey does to English literature. Both are remarkable for taste, elaboration, and fine touches of nature, and were possessed of the same chivalry of character. In this they differed—the one died by, and the other for, his master.

33.

The prone effigies, carved in marble mail.—P. 188.

Several fine monuments of the Lords of Seton and of their Ladies yet remain in tolerable preservation within the chapel of Seton, both inserted into the walls, and strewed along the dilapidated floor, and contain epitaphs in part legible. Grose in his *Antiquities* has given us that at length which commemorates the courage, the calamities, and the unflinching fidelity of George, the fifth baron, the friend of Queen Mary, in whose cause he suffered exile. He it was whose funeral procession, by a strange coincidence of circumstances, intercepted for a few minutes on the road the triumphant progress of her son, James the Sixth, and his court retinue, on their way south to take possession of the English throne; a touching episode, which Mr Tytler very appositely employs to conclude his

History of Scotland. The stone on which the King sate, while his retinue joined in paying the last services to the dead, is still shown, and forms a projection in the circular turret, at the south-west corner of the ancient garden-wall.

The greater part of the floor of the area of the chapel is strown with tombstones of elaborate workmanship, but cracked, broken, defaced, and nearly illegible. This arose from the building having, through a long series of years, been allowed to remain literally open in door and window. For some time past, more attention has been paid to it, the Earl of Wemyss, the proprietor, having secured the windows and doorway.

34.

Power built this house to Prayer.—P. 188.

At a remote period this chapel was endowed by the wealthy house of Seton as the parish church; and other establishments being subsequently added to it, it was rendered collegiate in the reign of James the Fourth. Many curious particulars of the additions to, and the alterations made on the ancient structure, may be found in the quaint and interesting little book, *The Chronicle of the House of Seatoun*, by Sir Richard Maitland of Lethington, (*Glasgow Reprint*, 1829.) An aisle was added by Dame Catherine Sinclair, wife of the first lord, and the choir roofed with stone by George, the third lord, whose widow, Jane, in turn demolished Dame Catherine's aisle, replacing it by one of better proportions, which gave to the whole structure the complete form of the cross. It is also recorded that she equipped the church and its officiating priests with a complete *stand* of purple velvet, embroidered with the same devices, and richly gifted the altar with plate and other decorations. These, however, only held out more cogent inducements to plunder to the army of the Earl of Hertford in 1544, who, after laying waste Holyrood, Loretto, and other adjacent establishments, ransacked and burned the chapel. The present edifice is not of great extent, and is surmounted by a spire, which does not seem to have ever been raised to the intended elevation.

35.

In power with Stuart and with Douglas vied.—P. 189.

Through several centuries the family of Seton occupied a first rank in Scotland, in wealth, retinue, and high connection. After the forfeiture of the vast estates of the De Quinceys, at

the termination of the succession wars of the Bruce and Baliol, these were conferred by King Robert, in large part, on the Setons, who had remained faithful to his cause; and on Sir Chrystal, who had been instrumental in saving his life at the battle of Methven, he conferred the hand of his sister. From this circumstance, a sword supporting a royal crown was added to the Seton arms, which originally consisted of three crescents with a double tressure, flowered and counter-flowered with *fleurs-de-lis*. In the reign of James the Sixth, the Lords of Seton became Earls of Winton. In 1715, George, the fifth and last Earl, took up arms for the Stuarts. He escaped from the Tower of London by sawing through the bars of the windows, and ended his chequered life at Rome in 1749. His magnificent estates were forfeited, and with him closed his long and illustrious line. Seton is now the property of the Earl of Wemyss and March, and Winton of Lord Ruthven. Within the last two or three years the Earl of Eglinton has also assumed the title of Earl of Winton. *Diu maneat.*

36.

When Rome was all-prevailing.—P. 190.

The Seton family were strongly attached to the Roman Catholic faith, which they warmly fostered by their influence and by munificent ecclesiastical endowments. The Protestant Reformation was obstinately opposed by George, Lord Seton, and after its accomplishment the family, although devoted royalists, almost ceased to interfere in public matters. The ancient bias, however, again showed itself in the first Jacobite rebellion, which proved fatal to the house of Seton.

37.

———*Their palace home,*
Where princes oft at wine and wassail sate.—P. 191.

The house, or rather palace of Seton, as it was commonly termed, was demolished towards the close of last century, and a large unmeaning castellated mass of building reared in the immediate vicinity of the site, which for many years, along with the sea-house of Port Seton, which was in 1844 destroyed by fire, was used as barracks for the militia. It was during this occupancy that the interior of the chapel, then open and exposed, suffered such dilapidation.

The ancient palace was a strong turreted edifice, evidently

built at various times, although the general style of ornament was that of the sixteenth century. On various parts of it were inscribed the words *Un Dieu, un Foy*, and *un Roy, un Loy*, as expressing the sacred and civil tenets of George, Lord Seton, the friend of Mary. Some portions of the structure were evidently, however, of much greater antiquity, and the whole was surrounded by a loopholed wall with turrets, which also included the chapel. Some fragments of this wall yet remain to the north of the ancient garden, which, with its buttressed and crumbling enclosures, yet exists—a curious memento of past times.

From the time of Bruce downwards, the palace of Seton was occasionally the abode of the Scottish kings; and after the junction of the crowns, it was visited by James the Sixth and by Charles the Second. On the former occasion, we are informed in *The Muses' Welcome to the High and Mighty Prince James*, printed in the following year, (1618,) that on the 15th May "the King's Majestie come to Sea-toune," where he was enlarged in a Latin poem by "Joannes Gellius a Gellis-toun, Philosoph. et Med. Doc."

From the connection of the house of Seton with the once powerful family of Buchan, "thre Cumming schevis" were also quartered with their arms, (*Chron. of House of Seytoun*, p. 37); and by intermarriage its male descendants have come to represent the illustrious families of Gordon, Aboyne, and Eglinton. The great houses of the Seton Gordons are descended from Margaret Seton, who married Alan de Wyntoun about the middle of the fourteenth century, her second son, Sir Alexander, having espoused the heiress of the house of Gordon.

Of the ancient palace of Seton, as stated in the text, scarcely one stone is left upon another, and it is difficult amid the grass to trace out the lines of its foundations.

38.

———*Stands Kelburn House,*
With its grey turrets, in baronial state.—P. 194.

In the text, reference is made more to the situation of Kelburn Castle and its capabilities than either to its real antiquity, or to historical events connected with it. Its appearance under a fine April sunset, and the associations awakened by the surrounding scenery, were such as are there faintly delineated.

In a more concentrated form, (that of a square tower,) Castle Kelburn is, however, of very considerable antiquity, most of the present additions having been made by David, Earl of Glasgow. Richard Boyle, Dominus de Kaulburn, is mentioned in a transaction with Walter Cumyn in the reign of Alexander the Third, the hero of Largs; and Robert de Boyville of Kelburn, and Richard de Boyville of Ryesholm, were subscribers of the Ragiment Roll in 1296, both of which properties are to this day possessions of the family.

Kelburn Castle is thus noticed by old Pont:—"Kelburne Castell, a goodly building, veill planted, having werey beutifull orchards and gardens, and in one of them a spatious room adorned with a christalin fontane cutte all out of the living rocke. It belongs heritably to John Boll, laird thereof."

39.

From Kilwinning's spire had oft brought down
The mock Papingo.—P. 194.

The Papingo is a bird less known to Sir William Jardine or to Mr James Wilson than to heraldry; and in the days when the bow and arrow were used in war throughout the whole of Europe, by several of the acts of the old Scotch Parliament, the young men of every parish were strictly commended, in spite of the Sir Andrew Agnews of their age, to practise archery, for an hour or two every Sunday, after divine service. When this custom fell into desuetude in almost every other quarter, archery appears to have remained even to our own day as a favourite recreation and accomplishment at Kilwinning, the most distinctive kind being the shooting at the Papingo, which is cut in wood, fixed in the end of a pole, and placed about a hundred and twenty feet high, on the steeple of the monastery, the archer who shoots it down being honoured with the title of Captain for the year. The laws and usages of the Company are known only by tradition prior to 1488, but from 1688 regular records have been kept. At this latter period a piece of plate was substituted for a sash, which had been the victor's reward from the former era. This sash, or *benn*, was a piece of taffeta or Persian, of different colours, chiefly red, green, white, and blue, and not less in value than £20 Scotch.

The festival of the Papingo is still annually held at Maybole, in the same county; and from a curious description of it in the

history of the Somerville family, Sir Walter Scott acknowledges to have drawn the hint of the inimitable serio-comic descriptive scene in *Old Mortality*, wherein Goose Gobbie, in his negligé armour, runs full tilt at the Noah's ark carriage of Lady Margaret Bellenden, the unfailing remembrancer of King Charles the Second, of blessed memory.

40.

———*The castled steep*
Of Broadwick reddened with responsive blaze.—P. 196.

An allusion is here made to the signal-light in the vicinity of Turnberry Castle, the ancient seat of the Earls of Carrick, the maternal ancestors of Bruce, by which the hero of Bannockburn was induced to enter Scotland; and which, though at first a source of disappointment, was the precursor of a series of successes, which terminated in the independence of his native country.

The whole circumstances are minutely described by Barbour, (*Bruce*, book iv. canto 1,) and with more than his wonted spirit and vivacity. So fine are his introductory lines, that Sir Walter Scott seems to think that they served as a model for the style of Gawain Douglas.

More beautiful, however, by far is the description in the fifth canto of the *Lord of the Isles*, stanza xiii.

"South and by west the armada bore,
And near at length the Carrick shore;
As less and less the distance grows,
High and more high the beacon rose;
The light, that seemed a twinkling star,
Now blazed portentous, fierce, and far.
Dark-red the heaven above it glowed,
Dark-red the sea beneath it flowed,
Red rose the rocks on ocean's brim,
In blood-red light her islets swim;
Wild scream the dazzled sea-fowl gave," &c.

41.

———*Thy time-resisting head,*
Whose umbrage overhangs the dead,
Thou venerable Thorn.—P. 199.

On a field between the ancient village of Preston and Cockenzie, there exists—or very recently existed—a tree of this description, which tradition points out as being near the spot where Colonel Gardiner received his mortal wound. I have

more than once regarded this leafy monument of the brave with feelings of no ordinary interest. It is within sight of the house wherein the hero's family were then living.

42.

Hark, 'twas the bagpipe that awoke
Its tones of battle and alarms!—P. 200.

"The pipes played, and the clans rushed forward, each in its own dark column. As they advanced they mended their pace, and the muttering sounds of the men began to swell into a wild cry."—*Waverley*, vol. ii.

43.

The noble Gardiner, bold of soul,
Saw, spirit-sunk, his dastards flee.—P. 201.

Being deserted by his own regiment, who turned and fled after a few moments' resistance, he saw a party of foot, which he had been ordered to support, fighting bravely, without a commander. "He rode up to them," says Dr Doddridge, "and cried out aloud, 'Fire on, my lads, and fear nothing.' But just as the words were out of his mouth, a Highlander advanced towards him, with a scythe fastened to a long pole, with which he gave him such a deep wound on his right arm that his sword dropped out of his hand; and at the same time several others coming about him, while he was thus dreadfully entangled with this cruel weapon, he was dragged off from his horse. The moment he fell, another Highlander, whose name was M'Naught, and who was executed about a year after, gave him a stroke, either with a broadsword or a Lochaber axe, on the hinder part of his head, which was the mortal blow."—DODDRIDGE'S *Life of Gardiner*.

44.

The sole and narrow landing-place
We reached.—P. 204.

The Bass is only accessible at one flat shelvy point to the south-east,—the sole landing-places, and these but a few feet wide, being the south and north sides of this point. To command these there is a small fortalice, now unroofed, and in

ruins. To the west the cell in which Blackadder was imprisoned and died is still pointed out, with its three small iron-barred windows; and half-way up the acclivity, a little beyond the ancient garden, where now not even a "flower grows wild," are the remains of a Roman Catholic chapel, which, when the island was made the bastille of Scotland, state necessity converted into an ammunition magazine.

The Bass is about a mile and a half from the shore, and nearly the same in circumference. Around it the sea has been fathomed to the depth of 180 feet; and as the rock rises above it to the height of 420, the total elevation from the base is about 600 feet. Its most precipitous aspect is towards the north, where the descent to the ocean is almost a sheer perpendicular; and below there is a remarkable caverned passage leading completely through the rock to the southward, which is navigable in calm weather even at full tide.

45.

Yet human hearts have beat in this abode.—P. 205.

Tradition asserts that the Bass was the residence of Baldred, the disciple of Kentigern, in the sixth century; and he is regarded by Major, and by Spotswood, (vide *Church History*,) as the apostle of East Lothian, having fixed his cell at Tyningham, and preached through the neighbouring country. This account is countenanced by Smith's *Bede*, (p. 231-254,) where it is said that a Saxon monastery, dedicated to him, existed there. The diocese of the saint is described by Simeon as "tota terra quæ pertinet ad monasterium Sancti Balthere quod vocatur *Tyningham* a Lambermore usque ad *Escemuthe* (Inveresk.") Consequently it comprehended the whole superficies of East Lothian.

46.

———*Some ruins mottled with the weeds*
That love the salt breeze, tell of prisons grim.—P. 206.

In 1406 the unfortunate King Robert the Third placed his son, afterwards James the First, of poetic memory, in this fortalice on the Bass, as being the stronghold of greatest security against the machinations of his uncle, the cruel and perfidious Duke of Albany. It was for many generations the property of the ancient family of Lauder, who styled themselves of the Bass, and who are now, I believe, represented by Sir

Thomas Dick Lauder of Fountainhall and Grange, the accomplished author of the *Account of the Morayshire Floods*, *A Coasting Voyage round Scotland*, *The Wolf of Badenoch*, and other well-known works. It is supposed, however, that their mansion was not on the island, but on the shore near North Berwick; and a flat stone in the cemetery of the Auld Kirk is said to mark out their resting-place.

The island was afterwards converted into a state-prison, alike for civil and ecclesiastical delinquents; and during the reigns when Presbytery was proscribed and persecuted, many of its adherents, as testified by the pages of Wodrow, were confined here. The most distinguished of these was Blackadder, whose memoirs have been ably and interestingly written by Dr Crichton.

47.

Landward Tantallon lay, with ruined walls
Sepulchral.—P. 206.

Opposite to the Bass, and on three sides surrounded by the sea, rise the majestic ruins of Tantallon Castle, the great stronghold of the ancient Douglases, from which they defied alike the threats of the foe and the commands of the sovereign. It could only be approached from the west, and by a drawbridge defended by a massive tower and a double ditch. The walls, which form an irregular hexagon, are of enormous strength and thickness. Over the entrance the memorable emblem of the "bloody heart" may still be traced. The stronghold arose with the settlement of the Douglases in East Lothian under Robert the Second; and such was its power of security and resistance, that popular conviction, as evinced by the saying,

"Ding doun Tantallon?
Build a brig to the Bass!"

regarded its destruction as among impossibilities.

Quantum mutatum ab illo!—The very mention of Tantallon carries back the mind to the days of chivalry and romance, and to Archibald Bell-the-Cat, as depicted in the glorious pages of *Marmion*.

48.

Sole broken by the verdant islet May.—P. 207.

In early times such was the reputation of the fishery in the neighbourhood of the Isle of May, at the mouth of the Firth of

Forth, that it was resorted to even by the fishermen of other countries. A curious authentication of this fact exists in a MS. life of St Kentigern, (*Bibl. Cotton.* tit. A. xix.,) written about the end of the reign of David the First:—

"Ab illo quippe tempore in hunc diem tanta piscium fertilitas ibi abundat, ut de omne littore maris Angliei, Scotici, et a Belgicæ Galliæ littoribus veniunt gratia piscandi piscatores plurimi, quos omnes Insula May in suis rite suscipit portibus."—See as quoted in M'PHERSON'S *Notes on Winton*, vol. ii. p. 479.

The same site remains to this day the most favourite fishing-station on the Forth — turbot and other fine fish being thence supplied to the London and Edinburgh markets.

49.

———*The myriad wings, that like a sheet*
Of snow o'erspread the crannies, all were up.—P. 208.

It is curious to remark that the existing varieties of sea-fowl frequenting the Bass are almost exactly the same as those described and enumerated by the naturalist John Ray, in his curious visit to the island in 1661, (*Itineraries*, p. 191-194.) The most celebrated of these then and now is the gannet or solan-goose—an immense bird, measuring six feet from tip to tip of the wings, and which is almost peculiar to this rock and Ailsa Craig, on the Ayrshire coast. Of these birds there are many thousands, which may be seen, in the months of June and July, hatching their young on the bare shelves of the rock. Hence, in Drummond of Hawthornden's famous Macaronic poem, the *Polemo-middinia*, the island is characterised as the *Solangoosifera Bassa*.

END OF VOL. I.

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